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ORTON'S

EXPOSITION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

VOL. II.

AN

EXPOSITION

OF

THE OLD TESTAMENT,

WITH DEVOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL

REFLECTIONS

FOR THE USE OF FAMILIES.

BY THE LATE REV. JOB ORTON, S.T.P.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

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A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

USEFULNESS OF THE HISTORICAL PART

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT.

ROMANS XV. 4.

Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

HAVING proceeded thus far in the work of expounding to you the historical part of the Old Testament, I think it may be peculiarly seasonable and necessary, to lay before you a few thoughts on the usefulness of that history. To introduce what I have to say upon this subject, I have chosen an important and useful remark of St. Paul. Having exhorted the Christians, to whom he wrote, to bear with one another's infirmities, to consult each other's edification, and always to sacrifice their own inclination and humour, and oftentimes their own secular interest, to the good of others; he enforces the exhortation by observing, that *even Christ pleased not himself,* but submitted to many instances of great self-denial for the good of mankind: and this he illustrates by a quotation from *Psalm* lxix. 9., where it is said, *The reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me.* That is, "I have so great a zeal for thine honour, that I have been much affected and disturbed with the reproaches that have been cast upon thee, and the dishonours that have been offered to thy name, worship, and laws." It might be objected to this quotation, that it referred

immediately to David, and was his language. In answer to this, the apostle lays down, as a general and important rule in the text, that *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning;* that we may naturally and justly accommodate what was said to good men under a former dispensation, to our own circumstances, or the circumstances of the christian church, where there is a just and natural resemblance; and that those things were recorded for our benefit, that we might cultivate the tempers which are there approved, and derive many useful lessons for the conduct of our lives: and particularly *that we through patience,* which the examples of saints in the Old Testament strongly recommend, *and* that *consolation,* which arises from a view of their supports and deliverances, *might have hope* in God, and particularly the hope of eternal life.—I shall consider the words only in this view, as a general assertion of the Usefulness of the Old Testament, and particularly of the historical part of it; *which,* as the apostle observes in another place, *was written for our admonition.* And it will appear very useful, and worthy of our careful perusal and diligent study, if we consider that it is a faithful and agreeable record of ancient events—that it tends to explain and illustrate many other parts of the holy Scriptures—and that it conveys to us many important and profitable instructions. I will consider each of these distinctly, and then add some reflections upon the subject, chiefly of a practical tendency.

I. The historical part of the Old Testament contains a faithful and entertaining record of ancient events.

History in general has always been allowed to be very useful, and capable of being improved to many excellent purposes. We may discover many useful truths, and learn many important branches of duty, by the reasonings of our own minds, and the contemplation of those objects with which we are surrounded. But for the knowledge of past events, we are beholden to the report and record of others; the proper use of which is, to promote our improvement in goodness, and fit us for services to mankind. It is to teach us by example, and to prepare us for making wise remarks, and manifesting a becoming conduct; and

by knowing the things that have been, to be better judges of the things that are.

Some who have taken great pains to sink the credit of the sacred history, have acknowledged that history is philosophy, teaching us by example how to conduct ourselves in all the stations of private and public life. Nay, they have carried the matter so far as to say, that it is of all means the most proper to train us up to public and private virtue. But if this should not be allowed, (as I think it cannot), yet every one that is able to read, and reflect on what he reads, is able to make a good use of history. It affords a kind of map of the country through which we are passengers; and by it we may learn in many instances to guide ourselves, and choose the direct road to happiness.

The history of ancient times, and of the first ages of the world, is peculiarly agreeable. We have a natural curiosity to know the state and circumstances of the earliest ages, the origin of mankind, the establishment of kingdoms and nations, and the revolutions and changes of those which have been the most remarkable and extensive. This knowledge of antiquity is very useful; and learned men are glad to make up the defects of history by ancient medals, monuments, &c.

Now the histories of the Old Testament are very valuable, as they are the most *ancient* histories. There are no heathen writers of greater antiquity, than one or two who were contemporaries with Ezra and Nehemiah, the last of the Old Testament historians; and they could not write, with any great degree of certainty, of events much before their own time. The histories we are now considering, have this further and peculiar advantage, that they are all true in themselves, and have, in the main, been faithfully handed down to us. They were chiefly written by persons who were concerned in many of the transactions they relate. This was particularly the case of Moses, the first and the oldest of them: and though he lived several centuries after the creation of the world, yet, considering the long lives of men in those days, a traditionary account might be easily handed down to him, and with much greater certainty than it can be at present.

The learned tell us, that the heathen divided their time before their histories began, into two periods. One they called the dark age, of which they knew nothing; and the other the fabulous age, of which their traditionary accounts were very uncertain and fabulous. But of this whole period, we have an authentic account in the Scriptures, delivered by wise and judicious men; yea, by men divinely inspired, and therefore secure from any important and dangerous mistake. I shall only add, that these histories have great internal evidence of truth. The simplicity of their style and manner—the honesty of the writers, in giving no favourable accounts of their own nation, or particular families, or of the chief heroes whose actions they relate—their very particular account of their own imprudences and faults, and the transgressions and calamities of their countrymen, speak the integrity of their hearts. The manner in which the history is written, is agreeable. The narrations are plain, and yet beautiful—the style grave and manly—the stories are told in a clear and concise manner—it has *all* the advantages of common history: and *some* peculiar to itself; particularly, the sublime idea it gives us of the great God, and constant expressions of reverence for his name, and regard for his providence. These at once prevent our thinking it to be a fraud, and render it extremely agreeable and useful to wise and serious minds. Its antiquity, its truth, and the manner in which it is written, all render this history worthy of our perusal and study, and very serviceable; indeed other histories have no glory, in comparison with the excellent glory of this.

II. They explain and illustrate many other parts of the holy Scriptures.

We shall have occasion hereafter to observe the consistency of their several parts, and that they all centre in one grand, leading design: consequently, the several parts of the Sacred Volume must illustrate, and be illustrated by, one another. In this view the historical part is useful. There are frequent references, in the Psalms and Prophets, and the New Testament, to the original state of mankind; to the fall; the deluge; the call of Abraham, with whom the covenant of grace respecting the Jewish

church was made; to the whole history of the Israelites, and the circumstances of many of their kings, especially David.—These references could not be understood without the history of these things. The book of Psalms is of admirable use to enkindle and assist our devotions; but the beauty of many of these would be lost, in a great measure, if we had not the histories of Moses, David, and the state of the Israelites, which some of the latter Psalms plainly refer to. It throws light and beauty upon many of those composures, to know upon what occasion, and in what circumstance, they were written. The history of the authors illustrates their own temper; we enter into their sentiments with peculiar pleasure, know how, as it were, to feel with them, and can better accommodate them to our own circumstances, as we better discern the resemblance between theirs and our own.

Again; these histories throw great light upon the prophecies of the Old Testament. The account we have of the state of the Israelites under their kings, and amidst their captivities and depressions, illustrates the prophecies of Moses concerning them. The history of the kings of Israel, and of good men under the reigns of their several princes; the attacks of the neighbouring nations, and the calamities they suffered by them, is a key to explain the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and several of the minor prophets. And had we as particular an account of the neighbouring nations, it would illustrate those prophecies concerning them which the Jewish prophets delivered, and which, for want of a further acquaintance with the history of these nations, are, and must be, very obscure. We have had occasion to refer to many prophecies, in the course of our exposition, which have been accomplished; and when we consider the prophecies themselves, it will, I hope, further appear, of what service the histories are to explain them.

Further, these histories are serviceable to illustrate the whole New Testament. Many of the Old Testament heroes were figures of Jesus Christ; the sacrifices and other rituals under the law were types of him, and of the institutions and blessings of the gospel. The most material facts in the Old Testament history,

are referred to, and argued upon, in the New. What was said to encourage the faith and patience of God's ancient people, is accommodated to the circumstances of christians. And our encouragement rises in proportion to the degree in which we understand the histories, and consider the cases of those ancient saints, to whom favourable and merciful dispensations were made. To this the apostle seems particularly to refer, where he says, *These things were written, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

III. They convey to us many important and profitable instructions: their great design and tendency is to make us wise and good.

And here let it be observed, that these histories give us clear and striking ideas of God's government of the world—they furnish us with many examples of piety and goodness—they set before us the danger to which the best of men are liable, of being overcome with temptation—they represent to us the great evil of sin, and God's displeasure against it—they show the insufficiency of any prayers or professions, without a suitable life—they manifest God's favourable regards to his servants, notwithstanding the imperfection of their characters—and they show us that there is one consistent, honourable, and useful scheme of divine government carried on through his several dispensations.

1. They give us clear and striking ideas of God's government of the world; both of his natural and moral government: his natural government, or his providence: and his moral government, that is, his treatment of his rational creatures, according to their character and conduct.

They give us clear ideas of the providence of God: that *his kingdom ruleth over all.* This is a truth, which the reasonings of our own minds, upon an observation of the frame of nature, its preservation and revolutions, would suggest; but it is particularly represented in the sacred history. It is supposed through the whole of it, and in many places delivered in express and striking terms. It is almost impossible to open the bible without reading this at the first glance; and it is often described with great plain-

ness, and great sublimity, both to convince the most illiterate, and to strike the most careless. The sacred historians were full of this thought, and they introduce it in a very natural and a very instructive manner. They ascribe all their mercies and afflictions, and those of their nation, whose history they record, to the hand of God. They acknowledge that *he lifteth up, and he putteth down;* that to him belongeth mercy and judgment. Whatever extraordinary achievements they describe, they impute them to the Spirit and power of God. The devotions of its heroes are perhaps as valuable a part of the history as any other. They seek their help from God, own their dependance on him, and give him the glory of all their deliverances and successes. They ascribe it to him, that other nations were overcome by them, or were their conquerors: and represent the greatest and most powerful princes, as only instruments in his hands, and employed to execute his wise and righteous purposes. And there is not one of the sacred historians, except the writer of the book of Esther, who does not take frequent occasion to suggest this thought to every reader, that *God reigneth among the kingdoms of men, and that he ordereth all things according to the counsel of his will.* It has been observed, that other histories are written to give us high and magnificent ideas of princes and conquerors, the pomp of courts, the splendour of conquests, the bravery and success of armies; but these direct our thoughts to the supreme and universal King, whose scourge tyrannical princes are to a wicked people. Here we see, as in the works of nature, "all things full of God." A strong presumption that these writings come to us under his influence and suggestions, and are instances of their great usefulness.

Further, we have the clearest ideas of the moral government of God, or that which respects the conduct of his rational creatures. He does not interpose in the affairs of this world, merely to show his power, but also to display his holiness and justice, his hatred of sin, and his regard to righteousness. The calamities brought upon our first parents—upon the old world—upon the Canaanites —upon the Israelites as a nation, and upon many of their princes,

all display the divine rectitude, and show, *that the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.* And though we cannot argue from God's dealings with the Jews, how he will deal with other nations, (as there was something peculiar in their constitution and government), yet their history inculcates this general and important truth, that *righteousness exalteth a nation, and sin is the reproach,* and will be the ruin, *of any people.* For the apostle tells us, 1 Cor. x. 11., that all *these things happened to them for ensamples to us.*

2. They furnish us with many examples of eminent piety and goodness.

The usefulness of virtuous examples is universally allowed; and where shall we find any equal to those in the bible? Many of the Old Testament saints were very eminent: perhaps, considering their advantages, as eminent examples of true religion as any in the New. The simplicity, as well as shortness of the scripture histories, does not allow the inspired penmen to take up time in drawing characters and writing encomiums, such as are to be found in common histories. This is left to the reader, who cannot but observe in them the evident traces of unaffected piety, deep humility, generous benevolence, strict temperance, undaunted fortitude, meek resignation, and the like. And one would think that every reader must feel an inclination to celebrate and imitate what is so lovely and laudable. To stir up such inclinations, a hint is sufficient, and perhaps may be more effectual than a laboured panegyric or description. I would only observe, that there are good examples for the young and the old, for persons of both sexes, for statesmen and soldiers, for divines, tradesmen, and mechanics; and these examples come recommended by the sanction of God himself. There are, particularly, some shining characters, which he has marked out with especial approbation; and they were recorded to promote our emulation. There is an abstract of the principal characters in these histories, in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews; and illustrated with this view, that we may be *followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

3. They set before us the danger in which the best of men are of being overcome by temptation.

The most perfect of human characters are not exempt from what may be a grievance and reproach to them: the most celebrated saints under the Old Testament had displayed some things in them, which cannot be commended or vindicated. Instances may be found in the lives of Noah, Lot, Abraham, David, Solomon and some of the prophets. And though some writers have very indecently exposed their frailties, and disguised their virtues, in order to weaken the credit of revelation, yet we cannot vindicate them, and even the sacred histories themselves condemn them. Our business is candidly to think that they were but men; men of like passions, and subject to the same infirmities, with the rest of the species. Their faults are recorded for our warning; and the warning is important and useful. They caution us *not to be high-minded, but fear,* whatever advances we may have made in religion. And let me add, it is a debt of justice to good characters in ancient times, as well as at present, not hastily to receive an opinion to their disadvantage, but to consider the circumstances of the action, of time and place, to judge candidly, and to pronounce with caution. Had many writers done this, instead of asserting confidently, or insinuating with a sneer, it would have prevented them from censuring many great and good men, whose virtues would have commanded their approbation and applause.

4. They represent to us the great evil of sin, and God's high displeasure against it.

Sin is so evil and bitter, that every thing which tends to make us sensible of its malignity and mischief, must be of great advantage. The sacred histories answer this end; for they represent the most remarkable calamities which have befallen mankind in those ages, as the effects of sin; and plain, avowed tokens of the divine displeasure against it. In this view the history of the fall, the destruction of the old world, and the many afflictions of the Israelites, are remarkable. These were awful memorials of God's hatred of that which is evil. The destruction of Sodom and of the Canaanites, for their horrid and unnatural vices, speak

loudly, that they are *the abominable things which God's righteous soul hateth.* Calamities on particular persons speak the same language. The death of Korah, and his company, of Nadab and Abihu, the destruction of the rebellious and murmuring Israelites, the calamities which befell David and his house, for his sin, and several such events, testify the righteousness of God, and how he resents the iniquities of men. The great ends of punishment, are the reformation of the offenders, and the admonition of others. The admonition was designed, not only for those who were spectators of those calamities, or shared in the effects and consequences of them, but for all to whom the report of them might extend. For the nature of God is the same; the nature and evil consequences of sin are the same; and amidst numerous snares and temptations we need a caution. Thus, after St. Paul had reckoned up the chief sins and plagues of the Israelites, their unreasonable desires; their idolatry; their impurities; their murmurings, and tempting of Providence, he says, *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples*, to the intent that we should avoid the like crimes: *and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.* And then he adds this important caution, *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

N. B. *If this discourse be found too long to be read at once, it may be divided here.*

5. The histories of the Old Testament show the insufficiency of any profession and privileges to obtain the favour of God, without a suitable life.

The scriptures suggest to us this observation, which frequent experience confirms, that men are very prone to depend upon a profession of religion, and their external privileges, as belonging to the church and kingdom of God, as if *that alone* would secure the divine favour. This is a fatal error, and we are cautioned against it by the precepts and by the histories of the bible; and the vanity of such a dependance appears from particular facts, as

well as the general history of the Jewish people. Moses was honoured with particular intimacy with God; yet, because he spoke unadvisedly with his lips, and did not sanctify God in one particular instance, he died short of the promised land. The calamities of David and his family, for his great sin in the matter of Uriah; the adversaries God stirred up against Solomon; and the violent death of the disobedient prophet, all show, that no privileges will prevent God from animadverting on sin, and that he sees the sins of his people with peculiar displeasure. But this appears more at large in the history of the Israelites. Though they were in a peculiar sense the people of God, who had his oracles among them, and to whom belonged *the glory, the adoption, the covenants,* and the like, yet, for their disobedience and rebellion, God punished them severely. And their plea of having Abraham for their father; of being called by God's name; and having him in an extraordinary manner resident among them; their cry of *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,* did not avail. God brought enemies upon them, who plundered and destroyed many of them, and at length carried them all out of their own land. They were punished with greater severity than other nations, because they had better opportunities of knowing God and their duty, and stronger motives to practise it, from their near relation to God, and the distinguished blessings they had received from him. *You only have I known,* (that is, you have I chiefly favoured), *of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for your iniquities* with peculiar severity. Now these instances strongly suggest to us, that external privileges and advantages are to be considered as helps and motives to inward holiness; as great blessings, if properly improved; but as aggravating our wickedness, if we abuse them; which we do in the most shameful manner, if we take encouragement from them to neglect the great duties of religion.

6. They manifest God's favourable regard to the upright, notwithstanding the imperfections of their characters.

The follies and faults of good men could not be passed by, without observation, reproof, and punishment. But though they

were displeasing to God, and his perfections required him to animadvert upon them; yet, having a sincere principle of religion within, and their lives being in the main holy and good, he did not cast them off. When they were brought to repentance, he forgave their sins, and restored them to his favour: and this, though their transgressions had been heinous, and attended with some aggravating circumstances; as in the case of David in particular. And he speaks of those persons, while they were living and after they were dead, in terms of high approbation and esteem. Thus Abraham, notwithstanding his infirmities, was styled the friend of God—Moses the servant, Aaron the saint, of the Lord—and David, the man after God's own heart. *These things were recorded that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope;* that our repentance, even for very aggravated transgressions and offences, will be accepted of God; that he is plenteous in mercy and ready to forgive. This truth is taught with more plainness and certainty in the New Testament, and more effectually guarded against being abused. But that can be no reason why we should not trace out the agreeable, though more obscure, intimations of it in the Old. To which I would add, that instances of the divine forgiveness and acceptance of upright men, notwithstanding the imperfections of their characters, are more encouraging, especially to minds disposed to doubt and fear, than the strongest general declarations. Besides, it is of advantage to compare both these together, to observe the connexion and harmony of the divine dispensations, for the pardon of penitents, and the acceptance of his faithful servants. This leads me to add,

7. They show that there is one uniform, consistent scheme of providence, which runs through every dispensation.

They give us the clearest apprehensions of the harmony of the divine attributes and dispensations. The grand scheme of the law and the gospel was, *to bring many sons to glory;* to make men holy and happy. Though the bible contains the history of many ages and dispensations, yet, there is an evident connexion of its parts, a common tendency to the same great end. One event

and one dispensation makes way for another. They all point to that of the Messiah, in which they are perfected. And this thought will help us to account for the obscurity of some of the former dispensations; the grand scheme being to be gradually introduced, and opened upon the world, as they were able to bear it: just as the twilight gradually opens and brightens, till the sun shines forth in all its glory, and makes a clear, uncloudy day. In this view these histories give us a noble and sublime idea of the blessed God, as not being weakly partial to a single family and nation, as the narrow-minded Jews thought; but favouring them with particular blessings and discoveries for the sake of the whole world: making them the repository of true religion for the benefit of the neighbouring nations; and for the same end scattering them, and their sacred records, through the most considerable nations of the earth. But we shall have an imperfect notion of the Jewish religion, if we consider it as complete in itself. It is plainly nothing more, than an introduction to one more perfect. Christ was typified in their law, prefigured in their history, foretold by their prophets: and all were intended to lead *their* faith to him, and to confirm *ours* in him.

The sacred histories point out to us the design of God's several dispensations; show them in their connexion and dependance; and lead our thoughts to the grand end and design of all, to establish truth and righteousness in the earth, and to promote the spiritual and everlasting happiness of mankind. These are the great uses of the Old Testament histories. They contain a faithful and entertaining record of ancient events—they explain and illustrate many other parts of the holy scriptures—they convey to us many important and profitable instructions—more particularly, they give us clear and striking ideas of God's government of the world—they furnish us with many examples of eminent piety and goodness—they set before us the danger the best of men are in, of being overcome by temptation—they represent to us the great evil of sin, and God's high displeasure against it—they show the insufficiency of any profession and privileges to obtain the favour of God, without a suitable life—they manifest

God's favourable regard to the upright, notwithstanding the imperfections of their character—and they show, that there is one uniform, consistent scheme of providence which runs through every dispensation. It is impossible for me, in this discourse, to do full justice to such an important and extensive subject. But the hints I have given, will afford copious matter of enlargement to those who will seriously apply their thoughts to them. I proceed, therefore, to make some reflections on the subject.

APPLICATION.

1. How unjustly are these histories censured and abused!

This is, and has been, the case. The grand events of them have been burlesqued, and the most shining characters reviled and ridiculed, by some men of learning; and particularly by a celebrated writer, in a treatise on the *Study and Use of History*. He has made many unjust and contemptuous reflections on Revelation in general, particularly the histories of the Old Testament: urged in such terms as, if regarded, would have a tendency to bring them into neglect and disuse. And as he is remarkable for wit, and the beauties of language, his censures may be of dangerous consequence to persons of weak understandings, or bad dispositions. He represents the chief use of history, to be for statesmen and governors. But, surely, it is useful to direct persons in private life; to excite and regulate pious, generous, and kind affections. This he allows, when he is speaking of other histories, and it is strange he should deny it to these. He objects, that the Jews were a superstitious, lying people. But if this were allowed, there are exceptions to national characters; and to charge every writer with such a disposition, (for which I can see no foundation) is certainly unjust and wrong. Besides, if their historians were liars, they would certainly have been more favourable to their own nation, at least to their own family, and, most of all, to their own character, which yet they are not. I have largely shewn what advantage these histories are

of; there is therefore no room for that contempt which has been thrown upon them, though it should be allowed (which is urged as a considerable objection against them) that they do not contain a just and regular history of the Jewish state, or what may safely be depended upon in settling the history and chronology of the neighbouring nations, though some of the most learned men of this and the last age have thought otherwise. But should this be allowed, it is strange it should be made a reflection on any book, that it does not contain what it never pretended to contain! It may be as just a reflection upon the Bible, that it does not teach men mathematics or trade. These histories were written not to make men chronologers, but to make them wise and good. I think St. Paul knew what they were written for better than Lord Bolingbroke, and he tells us it was "for our learning and admonition," that we might hate sin, love holiness, and have hope. If these histories are so absurd and unprofitable, as some would represent them, Providence has acted strangely in conveying them down to us so safely and so perfect as they are, when so many other ancient histories are lost, which they think would have been of much more use to the world. But I hope, and believe, you will ever entertain a different opinion of them: and look upon those as contemptible writers, as having very bad hearts, and very mischievous designs, who would weaken their authority, and expose to contempt what holy men of old wrote by the inspiration of the blessed God.

2. Let us be thankful to God who hath given us these useful histories.

Reason, as well as revelation, teach us that 'every good gift is from above;' and it is evident those are the best and choicest gifts, that tend to make men holy and happy. God is the author of those improvements of understanding, and those good dispositions of heart, which incline men to speak and write for the advancement of knowledge and holiness. The arts of writing and printing are from him; by which the knowledge of divine things is preserved and diffused. It is owing to his over-ruling providence that these sacred books have been

conveyed down to us so entire and perfect; and the superstition of the Jews, in numbering even the verses and letters of the Old Testament, made serviceable to secure those valuable treasures; and to his goodness, that they are not locked up in an unknown language, as they are among the papists. That they are so useful, that important instruction is conveyed in so pleasant a manner, is another call for thankfulness. When, therefore, your hearts are affected with what you read or hear; when you feel an inclination to imitate the most eminent saints, and to cherish the influences of those excellent principles by which they were animated; when your faith in God is confirmed, and your hope enlivened by the united testimony and experience of holy men; let your hearts ascend in praise to God, who hath given you 'his word, to be a light to your feet, and a lamp to your path,' and put it into your hearts to make a proper use of it. There is none who teacheth like him.

8. These histories are worthy our daily perusal and diligent study.

The reading of them is with great propriety often made a part of our public services. It is doing a becoming honour to the word of God, necessary for the instruction of the ignorant, and useful to fix the chief events more strongly upon the memory of those who already know them. Explaining and illustrating them is particularly serviceable for such purposes. But I would recommend them to your daily and careful perusal, and to your attentive study. One would think that they should be frequently read, if it were only for entertainment; for they are certainly the most entertaining histories in the world. And if a person who had read and studied the most noted common histories, and had never seen the Bible, was accidentally to meet with it, I am persuaded the perusal of it would throw him into a transport of joy and surprise, and he would give it the preference to all that he had ever seen. It is our duty to 'search the scriptures,' and to be desirous that 'the word of God may dwell in us richly, in all wisdom,' that is, that we may understand its meaning, enter into its spirit, propriety and design; and treasure up in

our memory the most important facts, and the most extraordinary characters there recorded. It is surely a shame for a christian to be unacquainted with it: that he should be able to give a circumstantial account of the reigns of Charles or William, and yet know nothing of the reigns of David and Solomon, though they were so eminent for princely qualities, and distinguished piety! But especially what an infamy is it to one, who calls himself a christian, that he should be well acquainted with idle, mischievous romances, and know little of his Bible! Why must such trash, as the world is now pestered with, be thought no way improper to be the subject of conversation, and yet it shall be reckoned unpolite to discourse on the characters and achievements of holy men of old? Or silence seal up every tongue in a company, after one of a superior taste has mentioned some scripture story, and attempted to introduce a conversation upon it? Romances are only the apes and mimics of history; and it is a pity they should be so eagerly perused, and so fondly talked of, while true history is neglected, and the oracles of God little regarded. May you, my friends, endeavour to furnish your minds with useful knowledge, and especially with that, which is to be found with peculiar advantages in the word of God, and let that be your delight and your counsellor: for it is 'better than thousands of gold and silver; sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.'

4. It is an important part of good education, to teach children the scripture histories.

'Wherewith,' says David, (*Psalm* cxix. 9.), 'shall a young man cleanse his way?' He answers, 'by taking heed thereto, according to thy word.' Now the histories, as well as the precepts of scripture, are useful to answer this end: not only for the reasons mentioned above, but particularly because there are so many shining examples of early piety, wisdom and usefulness: as Joseph, Samuel, David, Solomon, Josiah, Obadiah, Daniel, and others. It is of importance that children be directed to read these histories; yea, that they be taught the most important and striking facts, and informed of the most

amiable characters, even before they are capable of reading them. Children are naturally fond of history, especially that which contains wonderful and uncommon scenes. They can understand these, before they can enter into reasonings and arguments. Histories and examples strongly impress their minds; they easily remember them, talk of them with pleasure; and examples may draw when precepts fail. Let me recommend to you, who are parents, that you 'teach these things diligently to your children; that you talk of them in your houses, and by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up;' for such is the appointment of God. He 'established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel,' that parents should 'make known to their children the wonderful works of God, that the generations to come might know them,' *Psalm* lxxviii. 6. And do you, my young friends, read them yourselves, endeavour to remember them, and desire your parents to repeat them often to you, that you may remember them. I cannot but, upon this occasion, recommend both to parents and children, Dr. WATTS's *Short View of Scripture History*, where you have the whole of it set in an easy light, explained in a short compass, and a particular account of the Jewish history, from their return from the captivity to the time of Christ: a book which should be in every family, and which the most intelligent may find great advantage in often reviewing. Let me recommend it particularly to the study of those who are young, concerning whom I can scarce offer a better wish, than that, like Timothy, 'they may from their childhood know the holy scriptures, which are able to make them wise to salvation.'

5. Let it be the care of all, to improve these histories to practical purposes.

'All scripture,' says St. Paul, that is, the scriptures of the Old Testament, (for to them he chiefly refers,) 'is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.' It is not enough to read it for entertainment, or merely to furnish the mind with matter of speculation and curious inquiry. A man

may be a great critic, and yet a very bad character. He may be well versed in the history and chronology of the Bible, and yet be a stranger to real religion. Be it your care, my friends, when you read, or hear, any portion of these sacred writings, to consider what practical lessons they teach; and to attend to your own concern in them. I have endeavoured to direct and assist you in drawing practical reflections from them; and I hope you have attended to them for your own instruction and admonition. Think often of the bright examples of piety and goodness they contain, that you may 'go, and do likewise.' You will find in these histories, very strong and commanding motives to the practice of your duty, and many solemn warnings and cautions against sin. They will, in the language of the text, promote your patience and comfort, under all the troubles and sorrows of life; will furnish you with a lively hope of divine support and consolation, and of that eternal glory and happiness, which he hath prepared for them who love him; of which the saints under the Old Testament are already partaking. May God assist you to make this use of the Old Testament histories, and all the advantages you have for understanding and improving by them; that by these, and other helps, human and divine, you may 'go from knowledge to knowledge, and strength to strength, till you appear before God in Sion,' and share in the work and happiness of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David and Samuel, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God. *Amen.*

AN EXPOSITION

OF

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE FOURTH BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

NUMBERS.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS Book contains the history of the Israelites' abode and travels in the wilderness, for almost thirty-nine years together, till all those were dead that came out of Egypt, except MOSES, JOSHUA, and CALEB, and till they were ready to pass over Jordan into the land of Canaan. Wherein several memorable passages are related; as, their being numbered not long after they came out of Egypt, and again, not long before they passed over Jordan, from which it is called NUMBERS; their encampment about the tabernacle; the establishment of the tribe of Levi in the priesthood, upon occasion of Korah's rebellion; their several murmurings and seditions, and their punishments for them; how they were stung with fiery serpents, and cured by the brazen one; Balaam's curse turned to a blessing; their conquest of that part of the land on this side Jordan, and rules for the division of the land; God's speech to MOSES concerning his death, and his successor JOSHUA; and cities of refuge appointed. All which are intermixed with the addition and explanation of sundry laws, civil and military, but chiefly ceremonial.

CHAPTER I.

The men of war numbered, and the Levites exempted.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, *from the mercy-seat*, on the first [day] of the second month, in the second year after they

were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families by the house of their fathers, with the number of [their] names, every male by their polls, *in order to pay the half shekel,* (Exod. xxxviii. 26*.) 3 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

4 And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers. 5 And these [are] the names of the men that shall stand with you: of [the tribe of] Reuben; Elizur the son of Shedeur. 6 Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 7 Of Judah; Nahshon the son of Amminadab. 8 Of Issachar; Nethaneel the son of Zuar. 9 Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon. 10 Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 11 Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni. 12 Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 13 Of Asher; Pagiel the son of Ocran. 14 Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel. 15 Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan. 16 These [were] the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel, *that is, of companies consisting of a thousand men each.*

17 And Moses and Aaron took these men, which are expressed by [their] names: 18 And they assembled all the congregation together on the first [day] of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their polls. 19 As the LORD commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

20 And the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 21 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Reuben, [were] forty and six thousand and five hundred.

22 Of the children of Simeon, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, those that were numbered

* This people were numbered thrice by Moses. 1. Soon after their coming out of Egypt, Exod. xxx. 11, &c. and xxxviii. 25, 26. 2. When they were to be set in order for their encamping about the sanctuary, Num. i. ii. iii. and iv. 3. In the fortieth year, when all this generation being dead, their sons were numbered to receive their inheritance in the land of promise.

of them, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 23 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Simeon, [were] fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.

24 Of the children of Gad, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 25 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Gad, [were] forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty.

26 Of the children of Judah, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 27 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Judah, [were] threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred; *far more than in any other tribe, whereby Jacob's prophecy was accomplished,* Gen. xlix. 8.

28 Of the children of Issachar, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 29 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Issachar, [were] fifty and four thousand and four hundred.

30 Of the children of Zebulun, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 31 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Zebulun, [were] fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.

32 Of the children of Joseph, [namely,] of the children of Ephraim, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 33 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Ephraim, [were] forty thousand and five hundred.

34 Of the children of Manasseh, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 35 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Manasseh, [were] thirty and two thousand and two hundred.

36 Of the children of Benjamin, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 37 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Benjamin [were] thirty and five thousand and four hundred.

38 Of the children of Dan, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 39 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Dan, [were] threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.

40 Of the children of Asher, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 41 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Asher, [were] forty and one thousand and five hundred.

42 Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 43 Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Naphtali, [were] fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

44 These [are] those that were numbered, which Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel, [being] twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers. 45 So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel; 46 Even all they that were numbered, were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

47 But the Levites, after the tribe of their fathers, were not numbered among them, *because they were not to be employed in military affairs, which was the occasion of this mustering,* (*v.* 3.) *but only about the service of the tabernacle,* (*v.* 50.) 48 For the LORD had spoken unto Moses, saying, 49 Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel: 50 But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that [belong] to it; they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof, and they shall minister unto it, and shall

encamp round about the tabernacle. 51 And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh *to perform any of the offices mentioned* v. 50. shall be put to death, (2 *Sam.* vi. 7.) 52 And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts. 53 But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony. 54 And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.

CHAPTER II.

The order of the tribes in their tents.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 2 Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house; *every regiment had a standard for the three tribes that belonged to it, and every tribe had a particular ensign for itself, besides the standard for the quarter:* far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch; *probably about two thousand cubits, or an English mile, which is a sabbath day's journey, Joshua* iii. 4.

3 And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab [shall be] captain of the children of Judah. 4 And his host, and those that were numbered of them [were] threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred. 5 And those that do pitch next unto him [shall be] the tribe of Issachar: and Nethaneel the son of Zuar [shall be] captain of the children of Issachar. 6 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof [were] fifty and four thousand and four hundred. 7 [Then] the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the son of Helon [shall be] captain of the children of Zebulun. 8 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, [were] fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. 9 All that were numbered in the camp of Judah [were] an hundred thousand and fourscore

thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies. These shall first set forth.

10 On the south side [shall be] the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben [shall be] Elizur the son of Shedeur. 11 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, [were] forty and six thousand and five hundred. 12 And those which pitch by him [shall be] the tribe of Simeon: and the captain of the children of Simeon [shall be] Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 13 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] fifty and nine thousand and three hundred. 14 Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad [shall be] Eliasaph the son of Reuel. 15 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty. 16 All that were numbered in the camp of Reuben, [were] an hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies. And they shall set forth in the second rank.

17 Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards.

18 On the west side [shall be] the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim [shall be] Elishama the son of Ammihud. 19 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty thousand and five hundred. 20 And by him [shall be] the tribe of Manasseh: and the captain of the children of Manasseh [shall be] Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 21 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] thirty and two thousand and two hundred. 22 Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin [shall be] Abidan the son of Gideoni. 23 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] thirty and five thousand and four hundred. 24 All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim [were] an hundred thousand and eight thousand and an hundred, throughout their armies. And they shall go forward in the third rank.

25 The standard of the camp of Dan [shall be] on the north side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan [shall be] Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 26 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. 27 And those that encamp

by him [shall be] the tribe of Asher: and the captain of the children of Asher [shall be] Pagiel the son of Ocran. 28 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty and one thousand and five hundred. 29 Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali [shall be] Ahira the son of Enan. 30 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] fifty and three thousand and four hundred. 31 All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan [were] an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred. They shall go hindmost with their standards.

32 These [are] those which were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers: all those that were numbered of the camps throughout their hosts [were] six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty. 33 But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses. 34 And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses: so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward, every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers.

CHAPTER III.

The Levites' service, and the first born freed.

1 THESE also [are] the generations of Aaron and Moses, *their genealogy, and the things that befel them,* in the day [that] the LORD spake with Moses in Mount Sinai. 2 And these [are] the names of the sons of Aaron; Nadab the first born, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3 These [are] the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office. 4 And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office, in the sight of Aaron their father, *while he lived.*

5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him, *assist him in the holy ministrations.* 7 And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole

congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. 8 And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle, *they shall watch the tabernacle, guard the treasures, and assist in all the business relating to it.* 9 And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they [are] wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel, *to help him in the work of the sanctuary.* 10 And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office, *they themselves in their own persons* (*Ezek.* xliv. 8.) *and not turn over the work of the sanctuary to the Levites:* and the stranger, *any one that is not of Aaron's seed,* that cometh nigh *to execute any part of the priest's office,* shall be put to death.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the first born that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine; 13 Because all the first born [are] mine; [for] on the day that I smote all the first born in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the first born in Israel, both man and beast; mine they shall be: I [am] the LORD.

14 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, 15 Number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upwards shalt thou number them, *because the redemption of the first born was to be from a month old,* (*ch.* xviii. 15, 16.) 16 And Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded. 17 And these were the sons of Levi by their names; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari. 18 And these [are] the names of the sons of Gershon by their families; Libni, and Shimei. 19 And the sons of Kohath by their families; Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 20 And the sons of Merari by their families, Mahli, and Mushi. These [are] the families of the Levites according to the house of their fathers.

21 Of Gershon [was] the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these [are] the families of the Gershonites. 22 Those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, [even] those that were numbered of them [were] seven thousand and five hundred. 23 The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward. 24 And the chief of the house of the father of

the Gershonites [shall be] Eliasaph the son of Lael. 25 And the charge of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation [shall be] the tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, 26 And the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which [is] by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it for all the service thereof.

27 And of Kohath [was] the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izeharites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites: these [are] the families of the Kohathites. 28 In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, [were] eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the sanctuary. 29 The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward. 30 And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites [shall be] Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. 31 And their charge [shall be] the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof, *that is, the vessels which belong to the service.* 32 And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest [shall be] chief over the chief of the Levites, [and have] the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary; *he shall be next to the high priest, called the second priest,* 2 *Kings* xxv. 18., *who supplied the place of the high priest upon any special occasion, and had superiority over all the rest of the priests and Levites,* 1 *Chron.* ix. 20.

33 Of Merari [was] the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites: these [are] the families of Merari. 34 And those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, [were] six thousand and two hundred. 35 And the chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari [was] Zuriel the son of Abihail: [these] shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle northward. 36 And [under] the custody and charge of the sons of Merari [shall be] the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, and all the vessels thereof, and all that serveth thereto, 37 And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords.

38 But those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east, [even] before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, [shall be] Moses, and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of

the sanctuary for the charge of the children of Israel; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

39 All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, throughout their families, all the males from a month old and upward, [were] twenty and two thousand*.

40 And the LORD said unto Moses, Number all the first born of the males of the children of Israel from a month old, and upward, and take the number of their names. 41 And thou shalt take the Levites for me, (I [am] the LORD) instead of all the first born among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel. 42 And Moses numbered, as the LORD commanded him, all the first born among the children of Israel. 43 And all the first born males by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen.

44 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 45 Take the Levites instead of all the first born among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I [am] the LORD. 46 And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the first born of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites; 47 thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take [them:] (the shekel [is] twenty gerahs:) 48 And thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons. 49 And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites: 50 Of the first born of the children of Israel took he the money; a thousand three hundred and threescore and five [shekels,] after the shekel of the sanctuary, *which makes one hundred and fifty-five pounds thirteen shillings and eleven pence of our money.* 51 And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

* The particulars here make up twenty-two thousand three hundred, but out of them must be deducted Aaron and the priests, and the first born of the Levites, which were the Lord's in a peculiar manner (Exod. xiii. 2.) and so could not be given to him again instead of the other first born, Lev. xxvii. 26.

CHAPTER IV.

The Levites' service and office.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,
2 Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers, 3 From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, *or service,* to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation*.

4 This [shall be] the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, [about] the most holy things: 5 And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail *that hung before the most holy place,* and cover the ark of testimony with it†: 6 And shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over [it] a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof. 7 And upon the table of shew bread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon: 8 And they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof. 9 And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuff-dishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it: 10 And they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put [it] upon a bar. 11 And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put to the staves thereof: 12 And they shall take all the instruments of ministry, wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put [them] in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put [them] on a bar: 13 And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple

* They began to be probationers at twenty-five years old, (ch. viii. 24.), but were not admitted to their full administration till thirty; which was altered by David, (by direction from God, 1 Chron. xxviii. 13, 19.), to twenty years old, because then there was no occasion for their carrying the tabernacle, and therefore not so much bodily strength required, 1 Chron. xxiii. 24, 26. Yet after their superannuation they were still to be assistant as overseers. See ch. viii. 25, 26.

† Upon this occasion the ordinary priests might go into the holy of holies; and when they had done all their work there, the Levites might come also to carry the ark, v. 15.

cloth thereon: 14 And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, [even] the censers, the flesh hooks, and the shovels, and the basons, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and put to the staves of it.

15 And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear [it:] but they shall not touch [any] holy thing, lest they die. These [things are] the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.

16 And to the office of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, [pertaineth] the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat offering, and the anointing oil, *to carry them himself*, [and] the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein [is,] in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof, *to see that all was done in the way that was commanded.*

17 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 18 Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites, *that is, suffer them not to touch the holy things through your neglect, whereby they should be cut off:* 19 But thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden: 20 But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.

21 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 22 Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families; 23 From thirty years old and upward, until fifty years old shalt thou number them; all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. 24 This [is] the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, *to assist the priests while the tabernacle is standing, and to help them to take it down, and set it up,* and for burdens, *to carry it when it is removed.* 25 And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, *the eleven curtains of goats' hair,* and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, *the covering of rams' skins dyed red,* and the covering of the badgers' skins that [is] above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, 26 And the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which [is] by the tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all

the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them : so shall they serve. 27 At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service : and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens. 28 This [is] the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation : and their charge [shall be] under the hand, *the conduct and direction,* of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

29 As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt number them after their families, by the house of their fathers ; 30 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them, every one that entereth into the service to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. 31 And this [is] the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation ; the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof, 32 And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service : and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of the burden. 33 This [is] the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

34 And Moses and Aaron and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites, after their families, and after the house of their fathers, 35 From thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation : 36 And those that were numbered of them by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty. 37 These [were] they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation ; which Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

38 And those that were numbered of the sons of Gershon, throughout their families, and by the house of their fathers, 39 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation, 40 Even those that were numbered of them, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers, were two thousand and six hundred and thirty. 41 These [are] they that were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all

that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, whom Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of the LORD.

42. And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, throughout their families by the house of their fathers, 43 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation, 44 Even those that were numbered of them after their families, were three thousand and two hundred. 45 These [be] those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

46 All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chief of Israel numbered, after their families, and after the house of their fathers, 47 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation, 48 Even those that were numbered of them, were eight thousand and five hundred and fourscore. 49 According to the commandment of the LORD they were numbered by the hand of Moses, every one according to his service, and according to his burden: thus were they numbered of him as the LORD commanded Moses.

CHAPTER V.

Restitution enjoined; and the trial of jealousy.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: 3 Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell. 4 And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp: as the LORD spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel.

5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 6 Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit *one against another*, to do a trespass against the

LORD, and that person be guilty, *become sensible of his guilt;* 7 Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass, *the wrong he has done to his neighbour, either in taking away any thing from him, or denying what was intrusted with him* with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth [part] thereof, and give [it] unto [him] against whom he hath trespassed. 8 But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD, [even] to the priests: besides the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him.

9 And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring unto the priest, shall be his. 10 And every man's hallowed things shall be his, *such as were devoted to God, yet could not be offered in sacrifice, as a house, or the like;* whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, 13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and [there be] no witness against her, (*for if there were witnesses to prove it, then she was to be put to death,* Lev. xx. 10.) neither she be taken [with the manner;] 14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled:

15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, *that is, the chief of the priests then in waiting,* and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth [part] of an ephah of barley meal: he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it [is] an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. 16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD: 17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put [it] into the water:

18 And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which [is] the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse, *so called in regard of the effect it had upon her, if she were guilty,* v. 22.

19 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness [with another] instead of thy husband,

be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: 20 But if thou hast gone aside [to another] instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee besides thine husband: 21 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell; 22 And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make [thy] belly to swell, and [thy] thigh to rot: and the woman shall say, Amen, amen.

23 And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot [them] out with the bitter water: 24 And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, [and become] bitter, *produce bitter effects.* 25 Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar: 26 And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, [even] the memorial thereof, and burn [it] upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water. 27 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, [that,] if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, [and become] bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people. 28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, *not receive any harm by the drink,* and shall conceive seed. 29 This [is] the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside [to another] instead of her husband, and is defiled; 30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. 31 Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, *free from any punishment, though he accused her wrongfully, if he had any probable grounds of suspicion,* and this woman shall bear her iniquity*.

* Dr. DODDRIDGE, in his Lectures, states an objection made by MORGAN, to this institution of the water of jealousy, as if it were a contrivance to make it safe for women to commit adultery with the priests, and none but them. In answer to this impious thought, (the Dr. justly remarks) it is sufficient to observe, that nothing can be more unjust than to charge so stupid and villanous a contrivance upon so wise and virtuous a person as Moses appears to have been, who in the system of his laws has made adultery punishable with death, no less in a priest than any other person. Considering the consequences attending this trial, in case

CHAPTER VI.

The law of the Nazarites, and the form of blessing the people.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate [themselves] to vow a vow of a Nazarite, *or make themselves Nazarites, that is,* to separate [themselves] unto the LORD, *either for life, as* Judges xiii. 5. xvi. 17. 1 Sam. i. 11. Luke i. 15., *or for a less and limited space of time, as* Acts xxi. 24., *to be holy unto him.* v. 8. *after a stricter manner than others:* 3 He shall separate [himself] from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. 4 All the days of his separation, *or nazariteship,* shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. 5 All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth [himself] unto the LORD, he shall be holy, [and] shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. 6 All the days that he separateth [himself] unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body. 7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God [is] upon his head. 8 All the days of his separation he [is] holy unto the LORD. 9 And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it. 10 And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: 11 And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day, *set apart his hair to God, and suffer it to grow.* 12 And he shall consecrate unto the LORD the days of his separation, *begin anew to consecrate the very same number of days, which before his defiling he had vowed unto*

either of innocence or guilt, it would, on such a supposition, be a very ill-judged contrivance: besides that, the person appointed to preside on this occasion was to be the chief of the priests then in waiting, which would render such a conspiracy as MORGAN supposes utterly impracticable.—Lectures, p. 169.

God, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.

13 And this [is] the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: 14 And he shall offer his offering unto the LORD, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings, 15 And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings. 16 And the priest shall bring [them] before the LORD, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering: 17 And he shall offer the ram [for] a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering. 18 And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation [at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put [it] in the fire which [is] under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. 19 And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put [them] upon the hands of the Nazarite, after [the hair of] his separation is shaven: 20 And the priest shall wave them [for] a wave offering before the LORD: this [is] holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine, *return to his former way of living again.* 21 This [is] the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, [and of] his offering unto the LORD for his separation, besides [that] that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation.

22 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23 Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, 24 The LORD bless thee and keep thee *from all evil:* 25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, *manifest his love and favour to thee:* 26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, *show himself well pleased with thy person and performance,* and give thee peace, *all prosperity and happiness.* 27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, *call them my people,* and I will bless them.

CHAPTER VII.

The offerings of the princes, and God's speaking to Moses from the mercy seat.

1 AND it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them; 2 That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who [were] the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered: 3 And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered waggons, and twelve oxen; a waggon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before the tabernacle.

4 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 5 Take [it] of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service. 6 And Moses took the waggons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites. 7 Two waggons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service: 8 And four waggons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. 9 But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: 10 Because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them [was that] they should bear upon their shoulders. And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offering before the altar.

11 And the LORD said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar.

12 And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah: 13 And his offering [was] one silver charger, the weight thereof [was] an hundred and thirty [shekels,] one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: both of them [were] full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 14 One spoon of ten [shekels] of gold, full of incense: 15 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 16 One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 17 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

18 On the second day Nethaneel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer: 19 He offered [for] his offering one silver charger, the weight whereof [was] an hundred and thirty [shekels,] one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 20 One spoon of gold of ten [shekels,] full of incense: 21 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 22 One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 23 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

24 On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, [did offer:] 25 His offering [was] one silver charger, the weight whereof [was] an hundred and thirty [shekels,] one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 26 One golden spoon of ten [shekels,] full of incense: 27 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 28 One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 29 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

30 On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, [did offer:] 31 His offering [was] one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty [shekels,] one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 32 One golden spoon of ten [shekels,] full of incense: 33 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 34 One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 35 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

36 On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, [did offer:] 37 His offering [was] one silver charger, the weight whereof [was] an hundred and thirty [shekels,] one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 38 One golden spoon of ten [shekels,] full of incense: 39 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 40 One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 41 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen,

five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

42 On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, [offered:] 43 His offering [was] one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty [shekels] a silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 44 One golden spoon of ten [shekels,] full of incense: 45 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 46 One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 47 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

48 On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, [offered:] 49 His offering [was] one silver charger, the weight whereof [was] an hundred and thirty [shekels,] one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 50 One golden spoon of ten [shekels,] full of incense: 51 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 52 One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 53 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

54 On the eighth day [offered] Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh: 55 His offering [was] one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty [shekels,] one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 56 One golden spoon of ten [shekels,] full of incense: 57 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 58 One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 59 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

60 On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin [offered:] 61 His offering [was] one silver charger, the weight whereof [was] an hundred and thirty [shekels,] one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 62 One golden spoon of ten [shekels,] full of incense: 63 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a

burnt offering: 64 One kid of the goats for a sin offering; 65 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

66 On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddi, prince of the children of Dan, [offered:] 67 His offering [was] one silver charger, the weight whereof [was] an hundred and thirty [shekels,] one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 68 One golden spoon of ten [shekels,] full of incense: 69 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 70 One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 71 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Ahiezur the son of Ammishaddai.

72 On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, [offered:] 73 His offering [was] one silver charger, the weight whereof [was] an hundred and thirty [shekels,] one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 74 One golden spoon of ten [shekels,] full of incense: 75 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 76 One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 77 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

78 On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, [offered:] 79 His offering [was] one silver charger, the weight whereof [was] an hundred and thirty [shekels,] one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour, mingled with oil for a meat offering: 80 One golden spoon of ten [shekels,] full of incense: 81 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 82 One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 83 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this [was] the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

84 This [was] the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold: 85 Each charger of silver [weighing] an hundred and thirty [shekels,] each bowl seventy: all the silver vessels [weighed] two thousand and four

hundred [shekels,] after the shekel of the sanctuary: 86 The golden spoons [were] twelve, full of incense, [weighing] ten [shekels] a piece, after the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons [was] an hundred and twenty [shekels]. 87 All the oxen for the burnt offering [were] twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat offering; and the kids of the goats for a sin offering twelve. 88 And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings [were] twenty and four bullocks, the rams sixty, the he goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty. This [was] the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed.

89 And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation, to speak with him*, *that is, God,* then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that [was] upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him, *that is, Moses spake unto the Lord, propounding such cases as he desired satisfaction in.*

CHAPTER VIII.

How the lamps were to be lighted; the consecration of the Levites; and the age and time of their service.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick. 3 And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the LORD commanded Moses. 4 And this work of the candlestick [was of] beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, [was] beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had showed Moses, so he made the candlestick.

5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 6 Take the Levites, *the residue of the tribe of Levi, besides the priests,* from among the children of Israel and cleanse them. 7 And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and [so] make themselves clean. 8 Then let them take a young bullock with his meat offering, [even] fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for

* Hence it was called the Oracle, or Speaking-place, 1 Kings iv. 23.

a sin offering. 9 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation, and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together: 10 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites: 11 And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD [for] an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD. 12 And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer, *by Aaron and his sons*, the one [for] a sin offering, and the other [for] a burnt offering, unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites. 13 And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, *as a sign that they were given to him and his sons to be employed by them upon all occasions*, and offer them [for] an offering unto the LORD. 14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine. 15 And after that shall the Levites go in *(not into the tabernacle itself, but only into the court of the priests)* to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them [for] an offering. 16 For they [are] wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even [instead of] the first born of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me. 17 For all the first born of the children of Israel [are] mine, [both] man and beast: on the day that I smote every first born in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself. 18 And I have taken the Levites for all the first born of the children of Israel. 19 And I have given the Levites [as] a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary. 20 And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them. 21 And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them [as] an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them. 22 And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them. 23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

24 This [is it] that [belongeth] unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: 25 And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service [thereof,] and shall serve no more: 26 But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, *by way of instruction and advice,* to keep the charge, *to oversee and take care that every thing be done regularly,* and shall do no *further laborious* service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.

CHAPTER IX.

The passover enjoined, and a cloud guideth the Israelites.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season*. 3 In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof shall ye keep it. 4 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel that they should keep the passover. 5 And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, at even, in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.

6 And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day: 7 And those men said unto him, We [are] defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season among the children of Israel? 8 And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you. 9 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you, or of your posterity, shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or [be] in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD. 11 The fourteenth

* This is a particular command for the keeping of the passover at this time in the wilderness, for by the first institution they seem to be bound to keep it only in the land of Canaan (Exodus xii. 25.) and not in the wilderness, because they knew not how long they might stay in a place, or how soon remove.

day of the second month at even they shall keep it, [and] eat it with unleavened bread and bitter [herbs,] *in remembrance of their afflicted life in Egypt* (Exodus i. 14.) 12 They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it. 13 But the man that [is] clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin, *and be excommunicated.* 14 And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

15 And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, [namely,] the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. 16 So it was alway: the cloud covered it [by day,] and the appearance of fire by night. 17 And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. 18 At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. 19 And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not. 20 And [so] it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed. 21 And [so] it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and [that] the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether [it was] by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. 22 Or [whether it were] two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. 23 At the commandment of the LORD they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

CHAPTER X.

In this chapter we have the last order that God gave at Mount Sinai; Moses is directed to make and use the silver trumpets; Israel decamps from Sinai; Moses' entreaty with Hobab to accompany them; and an account of the solemn manner in which they began and ended their journeys.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Make thee two trumpets of silver*; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. 3 And when they shall blow with *both of* them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 4 And if they blow [but] with one [trumpet,] then the princes, [which are] heads of the thousands of Israel (Exodus xviii. 21.) shall gather themselves unto thee. 5 When ye blow an alarm, *not a long and uniform blast, but a broken, quavering sound*, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. 6 When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. 7 But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm. 8 And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets, *because as they were God's ministers or servants, such regard was to be paid to the sound, as if God himself had given the summons;* and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations. 9 And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies†. 10 Also in the day of your gladness, *feasts of divine institution*, and in your solemn days, *days of solemn assemblies*, and in the beginnings of your months, *the new moon*, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God,

* This metal was very fit for conveying sound. They were probably made like ours. Only two were ordered now; but in Solomon's time there were one hundred and twenty priests who blew trumpets, 2 Chron. v. 12.

† The Hebrews say, that here one species of distress was put for others, and that blowing the trumpets was practised in times of famine, of locusts, &c. They were certainly used on solemn fasts. Joel ii. 3.

a remembrance to you of God's promise, and a token that he will accept you:* I [am] the LORD your God, *who can and will fulfil my promise.*

11 And it came to pass on the twentieth [day] of the second month, in the second year *after their coming out of Egypt,* (ch. ix. 1.) *and just after their second passover, which was on the fourteenth day,* that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony. 12 And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran. 13 And they first took their journey according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

14 In the first [place] went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah according to their armies, *with all the regiments and companies belonging to his camp or standard:* and over his host [was] Nahshon the son of Amminadab. 15 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Issachar [was] Nethaneel the son of Zuar. 16 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Zebulun [was] Eliab the son of Helon. 17 And the tabernacle was taken down: and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set forward, bearing the tabernacle, *having six waggons for that purpose,* (ch. vii. 5, 7, 8.) 18 And the standard of the camp of Reuben set forward according to their armies: and over his host [was] Elizur the son of Shedeur. 19 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon [was] Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 20 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad [was] Eliasaph the son of Deuel. 21 And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary, *the ark and the most holy furniture thereof*; and [the other], *the Gershonites and the Merarites,* did set up the tabernacle against they came. 22 And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set forward according to their armies: and over his host [was] Elishama the son of Ammihud. 23 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Manasseh [was] Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 24 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Benjamin [was] Abidan the son of Gideoni. 25 And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, [which was] the rereward of all the camps throughout their hosts, *or the gathering of all the camps, the weak and the unclean coming after them,*

* Thus we read 2 Chron. xiii. 12. Abijah encouraged himself and people against Jeroboam, saying, *God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets;* and when the priests sounded, God appeared for them.

bringing up the rear under their care: and over his host [was] Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai *. 26 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Asher [was] Pagiel the son of Ocran. 27 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Naphtali [was] Ahira the son of Enan. 28 Thus [were] the journeyings of the children of Israel according to their armies, when they set forward.

29 And Moses said unto Hobab *his brother in law,* the son of Raguel, *or Jethro,* the Medianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good, *thou shalt share with us an inheritance in the land of Canaan:* for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel. 30 And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred †. 31 And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes, *thy knowledge of this wilderness will be of great service to us* ‡. 32 And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

33 And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. 34 And the cloud of the LORD [was] upon them by day, *to shadow them from the heat of the sun,* (Psalm cv. 39.) when they went out of the camp.

35 And it came to pass when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, *for the help, comfort, and conduct of this people,* and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. 36 And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel, *return in mercy; keep us in safety and peace, from dangers and enemies; all the thousands of Israel are nothing, unless thou wilt watch over them with thy ever-wakeful eyes, and guard them with thy almighty hands.*

* This name, and many others in the bible are compounded of the name of God; and this being done in Egypt was perhaps designed to express their trust and confidence in God, that he would at length deliver them out of it.

† Probably he went into his own country at present, but either himself or some of his posterity returned to them again, Judges i. 16. iv. 11. 1 Sam. xv. 6.

‡ Though God directed them when and where to move, yet it would be useful to know where water might be found; what nations dwelt near them; with whom they might traffic; and what were the temper, character, and productions of the neighbouring countries; he therefore entreats Hobab to continue with them.

REFLECTIONS.

1 How much were they honoured who blew the silver trumpets; who called the solemn assembly, and led on the armies of the Lord! But still greater honour is done to christian ministers, than to the sons of Aaron. It is indeed an honourable office, to be employed as God's mouth to call mankind to duty. Let them magnify their office; and those may esteem themselves blessed, who hear the joyful sound, who diligently attend to God's call, and obey his orders and summons; that at the last great day they may, without terror and anguish, hear the great sound of the archangel's trumpet, which shall gather the general assembly of the whole world together, to hear their final, unalterable doom!

2 In the removal of Israel from one wilderness to another, we have a lively emblem of the state of man upon earth. The Israelites thought, that after three days they should have got to Canaan; but, lo! they are in the wilderness of Paran. Perhaps there might be some pleasing spots between the two, but they must not stay there. We please ourselves with the prospect of flowery scenes, that every thing will be agreeable; yet scarce are we settled in comfortable habitations, but Providence removes us to another wilderness. Thus it will be, while we have such frail bodies, and such weak, unstable minds. Let us, therefore, not expect too much in this world, nor look for durable happiness, till we get to the heavenly Canaan.

3. How desirous should we be of wise and pious friends, who may be to us *instead of eyes* in the wilderness! Moses was probably older than Hobab, yet he did not slight his advice. He was acquainted in some measure with the wilderness, yet was willing to have further direction. Let us not be *wise in our own conceit;* but encourage our friends to give us advice, and receive it thankfully. The scriptures give us general rules; but Providence often directs in particulars, by the advice of friends, who can see more and better than we can, and are not blinded, as we may be, by affection, or interest, or partiality to ourselves. Let young persons especially be desirous of the advice and counsel of wise, experienced people; to despise such, shows that they neither have wisdom, nor are likely to get it.

4. Let us be thankful that God hath spoken so graciously concerning Israel, and endeavour to impart to others the favours God hath bestowed upon us: Moses' offer to Hobab suggests this thought. We are marching through a wilderness, but, blessed be God! we have many comforts, and are in the way to Canaan. God hath *spoken graciously concerning his servants, and that for a great while yet to come. Oh! how great is his goodness!* Let us encourage others to come and join us in the way to heaven, to take their lot among us. Let us encourage them to *taste and see that the Lord is gracious.* Our treasure will not be lessened by their sharing it. Our happiness will be increased by theirs, especially if we are instruments of making them happy. May a more generous, publick spirit possess our breasts, and engage us to persuade all, especially our near relations, (as Moses did Hobab, in the instance before us,) to go with us into the land of everlasting rest.

5. It is the character of a true Israelite, to begin and end his journeys and motions with prayer; and for the same reason, every matter of difficulty and importance. Moses prayed, and Israel joined in the request; *Rise up, Lord,* &c. It is good to begin every thing with prayer to God; his is the best blessing, the best security both to body and soul. The thousands of Israel were not secure without it; with it, though an host should encamp against us, we need not fear. This should encourage us to have our eyes and hearts towards God; let that precept and promise dwell on our minds, and influence our conduct; *acknowledge him in all thy ways, and he will direct thy paths.*

CHAPTER XI. 1—23.

We have heard much of God's wonderful appearances for Israel, and left them proceeding on their journey to Canaan very agreeably; but in this chapter they have a melancholy interruption; here, as the Psalmist expresses it, they sinned against God, provoking the most High in the desert, by loathing the manna, and murmuring for want of flesh. Let us view this mournful story with attention, as it was recorded for our instruction.

1 AND [when] the people complained*, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard [it;] and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD, *fire sent from him in an extraordinary manner*, burnt among them, and consumed [them that were] in the uttermost parts of the camp; *probably the sin began among them that were weary and faint with travelling*, (Deut. xxv. 18.) 2 And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched. 3 And he called the name of the place Taberah, *that is, a burning;* because the fire of the LORD burnt among them, *that their crime and punishment might be remembered.*

4 And the mixed multitude that [was] among them, *who had followed them out of Egypt with carnal views, finding themselves disappointed, discovered their evil minds, and* fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? *The complaint began among the rabble, and then spread to the children of Israel, and rose so high, that they wept like perverse children, who cry because they cannot have their humour, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? Thus, as the Psalmist says,* Psalm lxxviii. 19., *they spake against God.* 5 *And they said,* We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick, *they remembered their fish and onions, but not their brick kilns, their bitter bondage, and cruel task masters:* 6 But now our soul [is] dried away *we languish and pine away for want of the refreshment we had by change of diet;* [there is] nothing at all, besides this manna, [before] our eyes †. 7 And the

* It is hard to say at what they complained, but probably because they were weary of following the ark three days without intermission.

† To show their folly and ingratitude, the nature of the manna is described, v. 7.

manna [was] *round* as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium, *a fine pearl colour.* 8 [And] the people went about, and gathered [it] *with great ease,* and ground [it] in mills, or beat [it] in a mortar, and baked [it] in pans, and made cakes of it, *and thus dressed it various ways as suited their palate;* and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil; *so that there was no reason to complain that they were dried away:* 9 And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it *.

10 Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent, *that is, openly, as desiring to publish their discontent, thereby to stir up others to discontent also:* and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased *at this mean and childish, ungrateful and rebellious conduct.* 11 And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? *This complaint of Moses was unreasonable, because he had so many helps; the oracle to consult, and the promise of strength to support him; but he goes on,* 12 Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers †? 13 Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. 14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because [it is] too heavy for me; *he could not bear their complaints and mutinies, and forgot where he might have strength; at length, as passion is apt to increase and grow more unreasonable, he adds,* 15 And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness. *This was not like the usual conduct of Moses.*

16 And the LORD *had compassion on the infirmities of his servant, and* said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation ‡, that they may stand there with thee §.

* The dew fell first, as a covering to the ground; then the manna fell; after that another covering of dew; and hence it is called hidden manna. Rev. ii. 17.

† If God bore with them, surely Moses might.

‡ This was ordered that the people might know who were chosen, that it was a divine appointment, and that they received their authority from God.

§ Once before, upon Jethro's advice, certain persons were chosen to be judges for Moses' ease, (Exodus xviii. 25, 26.,) but they were only for smaller matters; these, with Moses and Aaron at their head, were to be judges in the

17 And I will come down and talk with thee there, *in some visible sign of my presence;* and I will take of the spirit which [is] upon thee, and will put [it] upon them, *that is, give them the gifts of the same spirit of government which I have given thee,* (as 2 Kings ii. 15.), and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear [it] not thyself alone. *Thus God answered the complaints of Moses.*

18 *He then adds,* And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, and ye shall eat flesh, *prepare yourselves to receive, in a holy manner, the gift that you desired:* for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, *in an open, public manner,* saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for [it was] well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. 19 Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; *this was fair warning to take care that they did not eat too much;* 20 [But] even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, *by violent sickness, &c.,* and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD, *his manna, his deliverance, his covenant, and promise,* which [is] among you, *and who will observe all this,* and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?

21 And Moses said, The people among whom I [am, are] six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. *Surprised how all this people, which were near three millions, including women and children, should be fed a whole month, he said,* 22 Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them*? 23 And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD's hand waxed short, *hast thou forgotten what I have done in Egypt, at the Red sea, at the rock, and in the wilderness? Only believe and* thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.

REFLECTIONS.

1. How dangerous is it to provoke God by murmuring, especially after he hath appeared for us! *Neither murmur ye as*

greatest and most difficult cases, both of religious and civil affairs: and this probably was the original of their Sanhedrim, or great council, which continued during the whole Jewish state.

* We hope this was not the language of distrust, but surprise. There is something very sublime and awful in God's answer.

some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer, says the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 10. We should guard against a fretful, discontented temper; and surely nothing can make it appear more odious, or detestable, than the conduct of Israel here. They murmured for nothing; they strangely magnified their enjoyments in Egypt, to make their present mercies appear less. This is the usual way of fretful spirits; they magnify their own former enjoyments, or those of others, that they may now be thought most miserable. Let us remember that God hears our murmurings; and not dare to break out into unseemly language. He is especially provoked when we do so, because it is dishonourable to him, and has a bad influence upon others. If we have any good ground for complaint, we ought to spread it before the Lord: but he is displeased if we complain without cause. Let a man think what comforts he enjoys, what sins he commits, and how far he fails of his duty, and he will see infinitely more reason to rejoice and be thankful, than to complain.

2. How mean does it look to be so eagerly concerned about the things of this life! The Israelites complain that they had nothing but manna, and they must have flesh. This is below the character of an Israelite, much more that of a christian. *Having food and raiment,* as Israel had, *let us be content,* and not be over anxious, *what we shall eat, or what we shall drink.* The Gentiles seek after these things, who are strangers to God and his providence, his promises and covenants; but christians ought not so to do. When nothing will serve men but such and such delights and gratifications, it is a sign of the dominion of a worldly, carnal mind. May we, therefore, learn *to have our conversation without covetousness, and to be content with such things as we have.*

3. How easily can God command refreshment in the greatest extremity! The manna was a constant miracle, and so was the prodigious quantity of fowls. How excellent is his dominion over the kingdom of nature! All creatures are at his disposal. It is then very unreasonable in us to distrust his power and care, when we see the tokens of his providence every day and every hour. Let us guard against unbelief, for it will make us the most miserable of men. We may learn also from this extraordinary instance of divine power, *to cast all our care upon God, who careth for us;* and when tempted to distrust him, let us ask ourselves the question which he asked Moses, *Is the Lord's hand*

waxed short? Are his stores exhausted? Do his mercies fail? Let us think of the experience we have had of his goodness in former instances, and not affront and dishonour our heavenly Father, by an unbelieving disposition.

CHAP. XI. 24, to the end.

The seventy elders are gathered, and quails sent.

24 AND Moses went out *of the tabernacle,* and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle, *appointed them to come before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle.* 25 And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that [was] upon him, and gave [it] unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, [that] when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease, *that is, through all that day they spoke to the people in a sublime and elevated manner, concerning the greatness and glory of God, the excellency of his laws, and the reasonableness of submitting to his government and disposal in all things; so as to shew that they were under a divine influence, and these serious remonstrances and admonitions rendered the sin of the people, which immediately followed, the more aggravated.*

26 But there remained two [of the] men in the camp, the name of the one [was] Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they [were] of them that were written, *nominated and appointed to come,* but went not out unto the tabernacle, *perhaps being unwilling to take the charge upon them, as Saul was,* 1 Sam. x. 22., and *God's providence so ordered it that* they prophesied in the camp *. 27 And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Me-

* This was an additional proof, that whatever there was of the sublime in the discourses of the other elders, it was not in consequence of their being before God, and their being elevated with the honour done them; but because his Spirit came upon them, so that even these men, though probably hid in their tents, could not forbear breaking out into a sublime discourse.

dad do prophesy in the camp. 28 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, [one] of his young men, answered and said, my lord Moses, forbid them. *This he spake out of zeal for his master* (v. 29.) so Luke ix. 49, 50. Mark ix. 38.) *because they seemed by their staying behind, to refuse to have any dependance on Moses.* 29 And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake, *dost thou think it reflects upon me, or derogates from my honour?* Would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, [and] that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them *. 30 And Moses gat him into the camp, *well pleased and satisfied,* he and the elders of Israel, *who were thus solemnly admitted and fixed in their office.*

31 And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the *Red* sea, and let [them] fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits [high] upon the face of the earth †. 32 And the people stood up all that day, and all [that] night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least, gathered ten homers ‡: and they spread [them] all abroad for themselves round about the camp, *to dry in the sun, or perhaps to salt.* 33 And while the flesh [was] yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague, *probably the chief murmurers, or ringleaders, were seized with sickness till they died.* 34 And he called the name of that place, Kibroth-hattaavah, *that is, the graves of lust, to which their immoderate desires brought them:* because there they buried the people that lusted.

35 [And] the people journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah unto Hazeroth; and abode at Hazeroth.

* This was a most noble reply, and expresses the meek disposition of Moses, and his affectionate regard for all the people.

† The Psalmist says, *It rained flesh like dust, and feathered fowl,* or *flying fowl, like sand of the sea,* (Psalm lxxviii. 26.) Some have supposed they were locusts, because of the quantity, and their being common food, capable of being dried by the sun and kept a long time; but it is in the original, *Fowl of the wing,* or *flying fowl.*

‡ Some good commentators think it should be rendered *heaps,* or large quantities.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We may learn from this part of the chapter, how easily God can punish us, even when answering our unreasonable desires, by turning them into plagues and miseries. He gave this discontented people their desire, but sent his wrath with it. *Psalm* lxxviii. 31. God highly resented this notorious affront, and took such a method of showing his displeasure, by which they might read their sin in their punishment. Let this moderate our desires; let us be careful that they are reasonable, and not pretend to prescribe to God. He may grant our request, to our unspeakable grief and torment. God is a wise and affectionate father, and if he denies his children any thing, it is because it is not good for them. Let us then always be disposed to say, *Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

2. We see the energy of the Spirit of God in fitting men for whatever they are called to. How remarkably did he pour it out on these seventy elders, to fit them for their work! It was his Spirit, poured out on his servants in former ages, that furnished them with their gifts and graces; and it should be our wish and prayer that it may be poured out upon the ministers of God; that his Spirit may clothe them, and furnish them for the services to which they are called; that when they may be ready to suspect themselves, and to decline any important service, they may be animated to it, and strengthened for it. *The residue of the Spirit is with God:* to him let us look, even *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. He will give his Spirit to all them that ask it.*

3. How amiable is it to conquer the workings of envy, and to endeavour to root it out of the mind. Moses sought not himself, nor his own honour, but the glory of God, and the good of his people. When Joshua would have had him silence the two prophets, who did not come into the tabernacle, he rejected the proposal with disdain. How amiable a spirit! The spirit of the gospel is a spirit of meekness and love: instead of grieving at the superior abilities, and greater acceptance of others, we should rejoice in them, and bless God for them: be glad that Christ is preached, and souls saved, though by those who are not of our party or per-

suasion; yea, by whom our party may be lessened. Instead of having them forbid preaching and labouring for souls, as hath been frequently done by warm zealots, we should bid them good speed in God's name, and pray that their numbers may be increased. Remember what the apostle James saith, ch. iii. 16. 17., *Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

CHAPTER XII.

Miriam and Aaron's sedition, and Miriam healed.

1 AND Miriam (see Exodus, xv. 20.) and Aaron spake against Moses, *despised his authority and affronted him*, because of the Ethiopian woman, *or Cushite*, whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman, *that is, Zipporah the daughter of Jethro, who was an Arabian, which part of the country was called Cush, or Ethiopia* *. 2 And they said, hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? *why then should not we have a share in the government, at least be advised with in matters of moment? especially considering that we never were guilty of debasing and mingling the holy seed, as he hath?* And *though Moses did not hear all their insolent speeches, or animadvert on those he did hear, yet* the LORD heard [it.] 3 (Now the man Moses [was] very meek, above all the men which [were] upon the face of the earth †.) 4 And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, *to stop the sedition immediately, as it might have a very bad effect on the people,*

* This was a great many years back, and there was no law that could directly affect this case. Perhaps Miriam and Zipporah had some private quarrel; Miriam might think that Zipporah's relations, Jethro and Hobab, had been too much attended to, and that she and Aaron should have been consulted in choosing the seventy elders.

† Some have thought that Joshua inserted this verse; but it is more probable that Moses wrote it in the simplicity of his heart, under the direction of the Spirit of God, to shew how groundless the charge was. See PATRICK in loc.

and he said, Come out, ye three, unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. 5 And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood [in] the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

6 And he said, Hear now my words, *though you are prophets, yet know there is a difference among prophets, nor do I put equal authority and honour upon all of them:* if there be a prophet among you [I] the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, *by causing the representation of a thing to pass before his eyes when awake,* [and] will speak unto him in a dream *when asleep.* 7 My servant Moses [is] not so, *not such a prophet to whom I reveal myself only by dreams or visions, but he is one whom I greatly regard, and* who [is] faithful in all mine house; *he does not act partially, he is no self-seeker, as you charge him, but is faithful over all my church and people.* 8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, *more plainly than with others,* and not in dark speeches, *not in parables, and obscure figurative expressions;* and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold, *more of God's similitude than any other, without fainting and terror:* wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed, *withdrew the sign of his presence, as judging them unworthy of any further discourse.* 10 And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle, and, behold, Miriam, *because she began the quarrel,* [became] leprous, [white] as snow*: And Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, [she was] leprous. *It was his business, as high priest, to do it, and he pronounced her unclean, which must greatly affect him, who had deserved the same punishment.* 11 And Aaron *spake to his younger brother with great humility, and* said unto Moses, alas! my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. 12 Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb; *like a child dead in the womb; let her not live in this miserable condition, continually shut out of the camp, and useless to society.*

13 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee; *thus he shewed how soon he had forgiven the injury.* 14 And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father

* This was the worst kind of leprosy, and was reckoned incurable.

had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed *to come into his presence for* seven days? *much more when I have expressed my anger against her, and poured shame and contempt upon her:* let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in [again.] 15 And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days, *to humble her, to give her time for further repentance, and to be a warning to all the people:* and the people journeyed not, till Miriam was brought in [again;] *which was a special providence, and an honour done to her, because she was one of those whom God sent before his people.*

16 And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in *another part of* the wilderness of Paran, *in the way to Canaan.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. From this as well as the former chapter, we are taught to be upon our guard against envy; and not to be desirous of vain glory, envying others. It is necessary to watch against this, because it is difficult to avoid it, when those of our rank or circumstances (as in the case before us) are remarkably favoured by Providence. Questions of emulation and strife, are often great trials to a man's temper. These two prophets very much dishonoured themselves, by envying so worthy and meek a man as Moses. Let us then watch against so common and scandalous a vice.

2. When we are envied or aggrieved by others, let us not seek revenge, but commit our cause to God; thus Moses did. The wisest and best of men must expect envy and affronts from others; and in proportion to their piety and zeal, will be the ill-treatment they sometimes meet with. Let us not be provoked or discouraged by them, but imitate the meekness and gentleness of Moses, and leave it to God to appear for us in what way he pleases. May we learn of Christ to be *meek and lowly in heart,* and *when reviled, not to revile again.*

3. The conduct of Moses teaches us, how ready we should be to forgive the injuries and affronts we may have received. He discovered an excellent spirit; did not tell his sister that God would avenge himself, and imprecate judgment upon her, but desired that the stroke might be removed. He did not take a pleasure in her calamity, and say, 'It was good enough for her,

it will cure her of complaining another time;' but he earnestly prayed for her. Let us remember that christianity plainly teaches us, *to forgive our enemies, and to pray for them that despitefully use us.* Too many in the world are not content that God should avenge them, they must avenge themselves; but this is very unlike Moses, and more unlike Christ. *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves. If thine enemy hunger, feed him. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

4. It may sometimes be our duty to animadvert upon the faults of christian friends, when we have reason to hope that God has forgiven them. Miriam was healed, but she was put out of the camp; so it may be necessary, where the faults of any belonging to a christian church are open and scandalous, that they be put out, for the credit of the church, and as a warning to others, till they repent and show signs of a better mind.

5. If those who spake against Moses were so punished, what must they expect who speak and rebel against Christ! *Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a son*; God manifested himself much more clearly to Christ, he was therefore worthy of more glory than Moses. *If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, how shall we escape if we refuse him who spake from heaven.* His authority is unquestionable; there is no plea for any rival; if we reject him, it is at our peril. Therefore *kiss the Son*, that is, submit yourselves to him, *lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.*

CHAPTER XIII.

We have here the names, instructions, and expedition of the spies who went to examine the land.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, *Comply with the request of the people,* (see Deut. i. 22.) 2 *and* Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them, *because the business was weighty, they were most likely to be courageous, and their testimony would be the better credited.* 3 And Moses, by the commandment of the LORD, *though mingled with displeasure at their unbelief,*

(see Deut. i. 21.) sent them from the wilderness of Paran : all those men [were] heads of the children of Israel. 4 And these [were] their names: of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur. 5 Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori. 6 Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 7 Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph. 8 Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun. 9 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu. 10 Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi. 11 Of the tribe of Joseph, [namely,] of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi. 12 Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli. 13 Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael. 14 Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi. 15 Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. 16 These [are] the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua*.

17 And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this [way] southward, and go up into the mountain; *the mountainous country that lies towards the north:* 18 And see the land, what it [is;] and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they [be] strong or weak, few or many; 19 And what the land [is] that they dwell in, whether it [be] good or bad, *fruitful and pleasant, or not;* and what cities [they be] that they dwell in, whether in tents, *as the Arabians and Israelites now did,* or in strong holds, *walled towns and fortresses;* 20 And what the land [is,] whether it [be] fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, *doubt not but God will preserve you in this dangerous journey,* and bring of the fruit of the land, *a specimen of its productions.* Now the time [was] the time of the first ripe grapes.

21 So they went up and searched the land, from the wilderness of Zin, *south-west,* unto Rehob, *north-west,* as men come to Hamath, *north-east.* 22 And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron, *or by Hebron*†; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak [were.] Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan, *a very ancient city* in Egypt. (Compare

* His former name signified only, *may he save,* this signifies, *he shall save;* and part of the name Jehovah is added, to direct their expectations to this, also to encourage him, and with a view to his future commission.

† That is, Caleb and Joshua did so, (Joshua xiv. 9.) probably they divided, and went two and two into several parts of the land, to avoid suspicion.

Isa. xix. 11.) 23 And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes*, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and [they brought] of the pomegranates, and of the figs. 24 The place was called the brook Eshcol, *that is, a cluster of grapes,* because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. 25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days; *which shews that they examined it closely, and not in a cursory way.*

26 And they went and came to Moses and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this [is] the fruit of it. 28 Nevertheless the people [be] strong that dwell in the land, and the cities [are] walled, [and] very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there, *tall, gigantic men, who were great tyrants and oppressors.* 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south, *by whom you must go up, and they have a hatred to us because of our past victories over them:* and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan. *This was the account of the ten spies, which might be nearly true, but exaggerated in order ot discourage the people.* 30 And Caleb *and Joshua* stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it†. 31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they [are] stronger than we. 32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched, unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, [is] a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, *destroys them with diseases, by reason of the unwholesomeness of the air*‡; and all the people that we saw in it [are] men of a great stature. 33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak,

* Ancient writers tell us, that the vines in that country were very thick, and that single clusters of grapes weighed from thirty to forty pounds.

† This was noble; he was prince of Judah, and therefore must lead the van; and hereupon Moses made him that promise, chap. xiv. 9.

‡ Perhaps there might have been some epidemical distemper before they came there. See Hab. iii. 5.

[which come] of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, *poor, weak, contemptible creatures,* and so we were in their sight*.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let us think with pleasure of the fruitfulness of the land of Canaan, as a type of heaven, that happy Canaan, which is before us; that better country! Some who have been there have told us of it; Christ and Paul. But *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for us.* We have some foretastes here; now and then a cluster, some spiritual consolations, to show us what that world is; let us be desirous to go over and possess it. Too many, like the Israelites, oppose this; they have but faint desires after heaven; would be glad to go there, but there is some lion in the way, some imaginary difficulties, or perhaps some real ones magnified. Let us not sit down and complain of them, as the Israelites did, but go up to possess the land, remembering, that among those who are cast into outer darkness, are the fearful and unbelieving.

2. With what indignation should we think of the base part which those spies acted! They dispirited the people, when they knew that God designed to bring them into the land; and when, in all human probability, there was no danger of their succeeding. The sons of Amalek were not superior to the God of Israel, and yet they talked as if they thought so. Observe what mischief a few unbelievers are capable of doing, by prejudicing men against God and religion. But woe be unto such! God's anger will smoke against those who cause his good ways to be blasphemed.

3. We may view with pleasure the fidelity and zeal of Caleb and Joshua, who were both resolute and brave. Let us encourage ourselves and others to seek the heavenly country. Nothing is too hard for God; the weakest, assisted by him, will conquer; a lively faith will make all difficulties vanish. God will *give power to the faint, and to them that have no might he will increase strength.*

* This was at best a shameful way of talking (laying aside divine protection) considering the many thousands of Israel, how the Canaanites were divided, how plentiful the country was, and what good commanders they had in Moses and Joshua. But it was worse, considering what God had done, and had promised to do, particularly in this instance; yet their unbelieving hearts did not regard this, and they suffered for it.

CHAPTER XIV.

We have here an account of the people murmuring at the report of the spies, which occasioned so great a difference between God and Israel, that, 'he sware in his wrath they should not enter into his rest.' These things were written for our admonition, let us therefore attend to them seriously.

1 AND all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried, *believing these spies rather than Caleb or than God;* and the people wept *all* that night. 2 And all the children of Israel murmured, *first* against Moses and against Aaron, *and then against God:* and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died *by any of the plagues* in the land of Egypt; or would God we had died in this wilderness *with our rebellious brethren; as if death was more terrible now than it was then.* 3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey *to the Canaanites?* were it not better for us to return into Egypt? *No sooner was this foolish question proposed, than it was complied with;* 4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt*.

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel, *in prayer to God to appease them, and check their madness.* 6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, [which were] of them that searched the land, rent their clothes, *to show their hearty sorrow for, and detestation of, their blasphemous speech and seditious design.* 7 And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, *renewing their solemn protestations of the goodness of the land,* saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, [is] an exceeding good land. 8 If the LORD delight in us, *and we do not forfeit his favour,* then he will bring us into this land, *be our enemies ever so formidable,* and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. 9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, *do not murmur nor give way to unbelieving fears,* neither fear ye the people of the land; for they, *instead*

* What a mad project! Could they find the way without a cloud, and live without manna and water? What! return to Egypt to slavery? But they knew not what they said.

of eating us up, [are] bread for us : their defence is departed from them, *their shadow, that is, their protection and courage; and though hitherto God has preserved them from being destroyed, because their sins were not full, yet he has withdrawn his help from them, and will certainly give them up to destruction,* and the LORD [is] with us : fear them not.

10 But all the congregation *raised an outcry against them, and* bade stone them with stones. And *so great was their infatuation, that they probably would have done so, had not* the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel, *to stop their furious attempt. And Moses drew near to know the will of God;* 11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me *by their unbelief and murmuring?* and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? 12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, *deprive them of the land promised to their fathers,* and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they. *Thus God was pleased to try Moses' fidelity, his affection to Israel, and regard for God's glory.*

13 And Moses *immediately pleads in their behalf, and* said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear [it] *and boast of it,* (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) 14 And they will tell [it] to the inhabitants of this land, *the Canaanites:* [for] they have heard that thou LORD [art] among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and [that] thy cloud standeth over them, and [that] thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now [if] thou shalt kill [all] this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, 16 Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, *could work no more miracles for them, nor effect what he had promised,* therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. 17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my LORD be great, *appear to be so, by pardoning their sin,* (*v.* 19.) according as thou hast spoken, saying, 18 The LORD [is] long suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing [the guilty,] visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation,] *thou hast threatened to visit, but not to destroy as one man at once, therefore* 19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy

mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people *many transgressions*, from Egypt even until now. *A strange plea! even the greatness of past transgressions, and past forgivenesses.*

20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word, *to thy intercession, for the present, and as to that universal destruction threatened against them*, v. 12. 21 But [as] truly [as] I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD; *the report of the glorious and righteous acts of God in punishing this rebellious people, in the manner following:* 22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, *my glorious works and appearances in the cloud, and in the tabernacle*, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, have tempted me, *that is, dared and defied me*, now these ten times, *many times, or literally ten times*, and have not hearkened to my voice; 23 Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: *none who were above twenty years old, who came out of Egypt, and concurred in this wickedness, shall see Canaan*: 24 But my servant Caleb, *and Joshua also*, because he had another spirit with him, *different from, and more excellent than that which the rest of the spies had*, (see Joshua xiv. 9.) and hath followed me fully, *in a full and constant obedience, with a faithful heart, and in the midst of dangers, trials, and extremities*, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went: and his seed shall possess it. 25 (Now the Amalekites, and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley, *or lay in ambush there, being alarmed at the approach of the Israelites*) To-morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, *or the way that leads to the Red sea, and to Egypt; whither you desired to return*, ver. 4 *.

26 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 27 How long [shall I bear with] this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. 28 Say unto them, [As truly as] I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: 29 Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me †, 30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the

* Bp. PATRICK is of opinion, that they began to murmur again at this declaration, and on this God repeats his threatening.

† Observe here, that the Levites who were not numbered, and the pious Israelites who did not murmur, are excepted.

land, [concerning] which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. 31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. 32 But [as for] you, your carcases they shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, *the punishment due to your rebellions and breach of covenant*, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. 34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, [even] forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, [even] forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise, *know to your cost what it is to charge me with a breach of promise* *. 35 I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

36 And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, 37 Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD †. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, [which were] of the men that went to search the land, lived [still;] *were not hurt by it.*

39 And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly ‡. 40 And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we [be here,] and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned. *What Moses had said, and the death of the spies, had such an effect upon all the people, that they would enter the land immediately, contrary to God's express command.* 41 And Moses said, Wherefore *even* now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper. 42 Go not up, for the LORD [is] not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. 43 For the Amalekites, and the Canaanites [are] there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword, (*v.* 25.) because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you. 44 But

* The LXX render it, *the greatness and fury of my indignation*, by the awful manner in which I will break in upon you.

† The Jews say, they died by a disorder that made their tongues to swell and hang out of their mouths; or rather, as the twelve spies stood before the Lord at the tabernacle, fire came out of the cloud and destroyed ten of them.

‡ No wonder they mourned, but it was too late, Psalm cvi. 25. The Jews keep an yearly fast on this occasion.

they, *as mad now one way, as they had been before in the other*, presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp: *but they slighted this, and they fared accordingly.*

45 Then the Amalekites came down *like bees in great swarms, and with great fury,* (see Deut. i. 44.) and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, [even] unto Hormah, *that is, destruction, so called from this melancholy affair* *.

REFLECTIONS.

1 THE exhortation which Paul gives to the Corinthians, in his first epistle, ch. x. 10., *Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer*, may be properly applied to us; as we are in great danger of the same sin. If Israel, after all the miracles before related, behaved so perversely and wickedly, who can say, he is in no danger of sin, particularly of unbelief, of distrust, of having ill thoughts of God, and of being discontented and impatient? Of all these was Israel's sin composed; and they are all too common in the world. Men are apt to complain for they know not what; raise difficulties where there are none; murmur at this or that condition, when the fault is in their own spirit and temper. Let us carefully attend to the advice of the Psalmist, *Harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation in the wilderness*, lest God should *swear in his wrath, that ye shall not enter into his rest.* The apostle enlarges upon this in the third and fourth chapters of his epistle to the Hebrews, which will, perhaps, appear to have peculiar beauty and force, after what we have been reading. Since we have Canaan before us, that *rest which remaineth for the people of God; let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into that rest, any of us come short of it through unbelief.* Let us not be discouraged by difficulties, or we shall certainly perish. There is no happiness for us if we are excluded the heavenly Canaan. It is of great importance therefore that *we take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.* We may be ready to blame Israel, and to think it impossible we should be so foolish; but the apostle thought

* Thus their carcases began to fall in the wilderness. On this occasion it is thought that Moses composed the ninetieth Psalm; in which he laments the shortness of life, and prays for grace to make a wise improvement of their calamitous state.

there was danger, for he says, *These things were written for our admonition; wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

2. Let us be encouraged from the example of Caleb and Joshua, to *follow the Lord fully*; to follow him universally, without dividing, that is, without having two masters, two interests, or two objects of pursuit. Uprightly, without dissembling; cheerfully, without disputing; and constantly, without declining. It is a delightful character, and well pleasing both to God and man, to be resolutely good in a degenerate age. May we thus follow him, whatever we bear, or whatever we part with, for the testimony of a good conscience. It is to be feared, that good men have generally as great odds against them as the good spies had, that there are ten wicked to two good. We have need to exercise great caution, lest evil examples seduce or terrify us. We have need of great resolution, must *gird up the loins of our mind*, break through difficulties, and *not follow a multitude to do evil.* Those that are zealous for God in a crooked and perverse generation, shall be owned by him with peculiar honour another day; they shall be distinguished, as those two good men were, from the rest; *they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels.*

CHAPTER XV.

To show that God intended to bring the children of these rebels into Canaan, he enacts more laws for their conduct when they came there. Here is the law of sundry offerings, and the stoning of a sabbath breaker.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you, 3 And will make an offering by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a free will offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a sweet savour unto the LORD, of the herd, or of the flock: 4 Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the LORD, bring a meat offering of a tenth deal of flour

mingled with the fourth [part] of an hin of oil. 5 And the fourth [part] of an hin of wine for a drink offering shalt thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb. 6 Or for a ram, thou shalt prepare [for] a meat offering two tenth deals of flour mingled with the third [part] of an hin of oil. 7 And for a drink offering thou shalt offer the third [part] of an hin of wine, [for] a sweet savour unto the LORD. 8 And when thou preparest a bullock [for] a burnt offering, or [for] a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace offerings unto the LORD: 9 Then shall he bring with a bullock a meat offering of three tenth deals of flour mingled with half an hin of oil. 10 And thou shalt bring for a drink offering half an hin of wine, [for] an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 11 Thus shall it be done for one bullock, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or a kid. 12 According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one according to their number, *that is, for so many cattle there should be so many meat and drink offerings* *. 13 All that are born of the country shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

14 And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever [be] among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD; as ye do, so he shall do; *which was designed to encourage strangers to settle among them and embrace their religion, and lead the Jews to be kind to them and entertain them.* 15 One ordinance [shall be both] for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth [with you,] an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye [are] so shall the stranger be before the LORD. 16 One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.

17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18 Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When ye come into the land whither I bring you, 19 Then it shall be, that when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave offering unto the LORD. 20 Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough [for] an heave offering; as [ye do] the heave offering of the

* The reason why meat and drink offerings attended their sacrifices was, because the sacrifices were feasts, and called the food and bread of God. The temple was his palace, the altar his table, and a bread and wine, as well as flesh, make part of our entertainments, so God required them at his table; and oil also, which was used instead of butter among them; in other places salt and frankincense were required.

threshing floor, so shall ye heave it, *as an acknowledgment of its being his property, and to express gratitude for your daily bread.* 21 Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD an heave offering in your generations.

22 And if ye, *that is, the whole congregation,* have erred *in any thing relating to my worship, through ignorance,* and *have* not observed all these commandments, which the LORD hath spoken unto Moses, 23 [Even] all that the LORD hath commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the LORD commanded [Moses,] and henceforward among your generations; 24 Then it shall be, if [aught] be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour unto the LORD, with his meat offering, and his drink offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin offering. 25 And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it [is] ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their ignorance: 26 And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them; seeing all the people [were] in ignorance *. 27 And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. 28 And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.

29 Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, [both for] him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.

30 But the soul that doeth [aught] presumptuously, *with an high hand,* [whether he be] born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD, *sets God at defiance, as if he were not worthy to be regarded, or not able to punish transgressors;* and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 31 Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off, *if he did it openly, by the hand of justice; if secretly, by the hand of God; of which there follows an awful instance;* his iniquity [shall be] upon him.

* It was according to this law that Hezekiah offered sacrifices for the transgressions of his father's reign, and Ezra for the sins of the captivity.

32 And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day; *he knew it was the sabbath, perhaps had been warned and admonished of it, but in vain.* 33 And they that found him gathering sticks *to burn or sell,* brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation, *that is, the rulers of the congregation, who represented and governed the whole.* 34 And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him, *whether this case were within those laws,* Exodus xxxi. 14. xxxv. 2. *or what death he should die. Upon this Moses went into the tabernacle to inquire;* 35 And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp, *because he hath presumptuously sinned, despised my authority, and put contempt upon my law.* 36 And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses; *all the congregation joined in it, to make them cautious and watchful, and to show their zeal for their Creator and his laws.*

37 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue *to fasten it on.* 39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them, *that as often as ye see them ye may be reminded of your relation to God, and obligation to keep all his laws;* and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, *any superstitious inventions and devices of your own in my worship,* after which ye use to go a whoring, *as in the case of the golden calf,* &c. 40 That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God, *separate from others, and wholly devoted to me**. 41 I [am] the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I [am] the LORD your God.

* In our Lord's time they made these fringes very large, and wrote scraps of the law upon them, but yet neglected to obey him. We have nothing to do with this law; if our garments are decent, and according to our rank, it is all God requires of us.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let us learn hence, to make the rules and commandments of God's word familiar to our minds, that we may not sin through ignorance, which is displeasing to God, and will certainly incur censure and punishment, if that ignorance be our fault. Let *his word dwell in us richly*, and be as familiar to us as our garments, or any particular ornament is. We have need of frequent hints and mementos of the importance of religion, that we may be guided by God's laws, in things both great and small. *Our delight should be in the law of the Lord, and in that law let us meditate day and night.*

2. How earnestly should we pray to be kept from presumptuous sins, that is, wilful, deliberate sins: these are great aggravations of guilt. Let us earnestly pray that all those instances in which we have wickedly departed from God, may be forgiven us; let us guard against them for the time to come; and *walk circumspectly*, with holy caution; *not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time.* It should be our daily prayer, *Lord, keep back thy servants from presumptuous sins.*

3. We should learn to pay great honour to God's sabbaths, and do no unnecessary work therein. The law of the sabbath is of perpetual obligation, it is of a moral nature; and the observance of it is enforced by the example of Christ and his apostles. *Remember it to keep it holy.* Let us avoid unnecessary labour ourselves, and not put our domestics upon any service that may conveniently be omitted. We see that God is jealous for his honour and the observance of his sabbaths; and though magistrates may neglect to put the wise laws of our country into execution against profaners of his day, yet God will not hold those guiltless who pursue business or pleasure therein. May we ever remember this awful story, and take warning by it, that we do not sin presumptuously; if we do, *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment, that shall devour us.*

CHAPTER XVI.

The rebellion of Korah, and his punishment*.

1 NOW Korah the son of Izhar†, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took [men‡:] 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown §: 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, [Ye take] too much upon you, seeing all the congregation [are] holy, every one of them, and the LORD [is] among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD‖?

4 And when Moses heard [it,] he fell upon his face *in prayer to God for direction, who accordingly ordered what follows:* 5 And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to-morrow *(giving them time to bethink themselves and repent)* the LORD will show who [are] his, and [who is] holy, *separated to the priest's office;* and will cause [him] to come near unto him: even [him] whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him, *and declare in some extraordinary manner that it belongs to him only to minister before him as priest.* 6 This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; 7 And put fire

* Seneca says, that 'Egypt was a country, whose inhabitants were very apt to censure and find fault with their governors, were they ever so innocent and good.' One would think the Israelites had learned their disposition by living among them so long. We have many instances of this in the history of Moses, but none more remarkable than what is contained in this chapter.

† Izhar was brother to Amram, the father of Moses and Aaron; so that Korah, the leader of this rebellion, was their first cousin.

‡ The original is singular, and refers to Korah, he stirred up all the rest; so Jude called it 'the gainsaying of Core.'

§ The common people of Israel only used to be engaged in these mutinies; but here the great men and wise men joined; which was more dangerous, and astonishing.

‖ They were angry that the priesthood was confined to the family of Aaron; they thought Moses had done this of himself, out of affection to Aaron, and that it was a scheme between them to engross all power in church and state to themselves. Korah thought he had as good a right to it as Aaron, being a Levite of the same family. The Reubenites, who were descended from the eldest branch of Jacob's family, thought they had as good a right to the government as Moses. All were displeased, and they flattered the people by telling them they were all holy, and that the Lord was among them; therefore they might offer their own sacrifices, and govern themselves without Moses and Aaron.

therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to-morrow, *act as priests:* and it shall be [that] the man whom the LORD doth choose, *or declare by some manifest sign that he chooses and likes,* he [shall be] holy, *owned as priest:* [ye take] too much upon you, ye sons of Levi*.

8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: 9 [Seemeth it but] a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, *nearer than the other tribes, though not so high as the priests,* to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10 And he hath brought thee, Korah, near [to him,] and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee; *God hath given you this great honour, and will it not satisfy you?* and seek ye the priesthood also? 11 For which cause [both] thou and all thy company [are] gathered together against the LORD: and what [is] Aaron, that ye murmur against him? *he hath done nothing herein, but what he had authority for from God. Thus he expostulated with Korah and his company, and would have done so with the Reubenites also, but they would not come.*

12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up: 13 [Is it] a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey†, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? 14 Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards *according to promise:* wilt thou put out the eyes of these men, *blind us with fair promises, without any performance? Or, wouldest thou lead us about like blind men, sometimes this way, and sometimes another? Thou must think we are blind not to see through such imposture;* we will not come up. 15 And Moses was very wroth *at this impudent message,* and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering, *give them some manifest token of thy dislike of it:* I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them, *I have not done them the least injury, but on the contrary, have done them many good offices.—This was the rebellion, and this the cause of it, and it continued, notwithstanding all that Moses did to quell it.*

* Thus Moses retorts the blame upon themselves, which they had unjustly laid upon him, *v.* 3.

† They called Egypt so, to ridicule the promise of God and Moses concerning Canaan.

16 And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to-morrow; *though Aaron has been used to burn incense in the tabernacle, he shall now stand before it on a level with the rest of the candidates.* 17 And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each [of you] his censer, *if you think you have as good a right to it as he, come and act as priests.* 18 And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron, *as rivals of Aaron the priest of the Lord.* 19 And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: *too many of them were ready to join him; they seemed confident of success, and perhaps designed to fall on Moses and Aaron, and destroy them;* and, *behold,* the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation. 20 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 21 Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. 22 And they, *that is, Moses and Aaron,* fell upon their faces, *to deprecate this wrath,* and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, *their creator* (Zech. xii. 1. Heb. xii. 9.), *preserver and governor,* (Job xii. 10.), *and therefore canst distinguish between the obstinately rebellious and the seduced, to spare the one, and punish the other,* shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24 Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*. 25 And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram *to expostulate with them, and prevent their ruin, because they refused to come to him,* ver. 12., and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. 27 So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children, *scorning the judgment he seemed to threaten, as if Moses had never wrought a miracle before, and as if no Israelite had ever been destroyed for*

* Some thinks this refers to a large tent which they had built in opposition to the tabernacle; but it more probably means their own tents.

murmuring and rebellion. 28 And Moses *made a proclamation to all the people, putting the matter on a very fair issue, and* said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works, *to undertake the government of the people, and appoint Aaron to the priesthood,* &c., for [I have] not [done them] of my own mind, *or out of affection to my brother.* 29 If these men die the common *natural* death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, *by common calamities, such as the sword, pestilence, famine,* &c., [then] the LORD hath not sent me. 30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that [appertain] unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD, *and that I am his servant, and was commissioned to do what I have done.*

31 And it came to pass as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that [was] under them: 32 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that [appertained] unto Korah, *all of his family who were at that time in his tent, (for some of his sons escaped,* ch. xxvi. 11*.) and all [their] goods. 33 They, and all that [appertained] to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. 34 And all Israel that [were] round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up [also.] 35 And there came out a fire from the LORD, *like lightning from the cloud,* and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense, *at the instant the others were swallowed up in the earth.*

36 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 37 Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, *from among the dead bodies of those that were burnt,* and scatter thou the fire yonder *in the unclean place, where the ashes are thrown*; for they are hallowed, *by having fire from God's altar upon them.* 38 The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates [for] a covering of the altar: for they offered them before the LORD, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the

* Some of his descendants were singers in the temple, many psalms were set to music by the sons of Korah; Samuel the great prophet descended from him, see 1 Chron. vi. 37, 38. Korah himself was probably destroyed with the two hundred and fifty men at the head of whom he appeared, v. 35.

children of Israel, *an awful warning against such as invade the priesthood,* ver. 40. 39 And Eleazar the priest took the brazen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad [plates for] a covering of the altar: 40 [To be] a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which [is] not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD: that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said, *that is, threatened,* to him by the hand of Moses.

One would have thought the awful judgments of God which they had seen, and the narrow escape they had had from sharing in the destruction, would have made them all serious and devout, humble and cautious, obedient to God and Moses; 41 But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD*. 42 And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation, *looked to God, having now no other refuge:* and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43 And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation.

44 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 45 Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces, *earnestly entreating God not to execute his vengeance; they had found success in this way before, and now try it again.* 46 And Moses said unto Aaron, *by direction of the Spirit of God,* Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, *to stir up the people to repentance and prayer, to prevent their utter ruin,* and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. 47 And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation, *that all the people might be witness to his intercession and power with God, and tender concern for them, notwithstanding their insolence and rebellion;* and, behold, the plague was begun, *and spreading like fire* among the people; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. 48 And he stood between the dead and the living, *hazarding his*

* What astonishing hardness of heart! what an insolent charge against Moses and Aaron, and God himself! and how shocking, to call these sinners against their own souls, who died in an act of wilful rebellion, *the people of the Lord!*

own life, like a good and bold man, to save theirs; thus showing his faith and courage, his obedience to God, and benevolence to the people; and the plague was stayed *at the intercession of this holy man, after having made terrible havock among the murmurers.* 49 Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. 50 And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *to acquaint him of his success, and to return thanks to God, who had so graciously accepted his service;* (as 2 Sam. xxiv. 25.), and the plague was stayed.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We may learn from this chapter, that the wisest and best of men should not be surprised, if they are abused, envied, and calumniated. Speaketh the scripture in vain, that *the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?* James iv. 5. Wherever a person in any conspicuous station does worthily, and exerts himself for the good of mankind, he will be envied, and *evil spoken of;* all his good deeds cannot secure him from the strife of tongues. Who could be more obliged to any man, than Israel was to Moses? Had he not been a father to them, and often saved them from destruction? He had no self-interest, yet is charged as an usurper, a tyrant, and an impostor. It is impossible for the most upright governor, or the best of the Lord's ministers, to please every body. Let us not then think it strange that we meet with such treatment, but remember, that we are the disciples of Christ, who himself was so treated. Let us act as he did, and *when reviled, revile not again;* and *consider him, who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself.*

2. Nearness to God is so great a privilege, that it should make us easy and thankful, whatever else we want. The Levites had this great honour, and they thought it *a small thing;* but it was really a glorious privilege to be separated to an holy use, as servants and ministers to his people. That should have made them content, though they were not advanced to the priesthood. Considering what a great privilege it is to draw near to God, let us thankfully embrace every opportunity of doing it; and not envy others their honours or superior advantages, but be thankful for what we have, and careful to improve them. If we have not the same dignities, reputation, and privileges as others, we have

abundantly more than we deserve; and this should teach us, *in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content.*

3. Let us diligently avoid the company of the wicked, as we would escape those judgments that will certainly come upon them. Several commentators on this chapter quote a proverb of the Jews, 'Woe to the wicked, and woe to his neighbour,' that is in danger of being affected and corrupted by him, and of sharing in his guilt and misery. It is dangerous to have any fellowship with those who affront and despise God. *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* It is particularly important that young men should beware of the danger of wicked company, of being led, by the persuasions of sinners, to say as they say, and do as they do; for those who sin together, it is most likely will perish together. *A companion of fools shall be destroyed.* God hath in his word, and by such instances as these, shown us the danger of associating with wicked men. Let us *therefore come out from among them, and be separate, and not be partakers of their sin. Enter not into the path of the wicked; go not in the way of evil men; go not near it; but turn from it, and pass away.*

4. We see in how awful a manner God can take vengeance on presumptuous sinners. The language of this story is, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. He is angry with the wicked every day.* He has various methods of punishing them; *strange punishments,* as Job expresses it, *for the workers of iniquity.* All the elements are under his control to punish the wicked. This is a lively emblem of that destruction which shall come on the ungodly; *they shall sink down alive into the pit of destruction,* hell shall close itself upon them, and *they shall perish from the congregation of the righteous.* Who would not fear such a destruction as this! The Israelites, when they heard the shrieks of Dathan, and the others who perished, fled with the greatest haste. Could we, as one well observes, hear the groans and outcries of those that are gone down into the bottomless pit, we should give more diligence *to escape for our lives, lest we also come into that same place of anguish and torment.* Let us therefore, by the ruin of others, take warning, and *fly from the wrath to come.*

5. We see the great power of prayer, and how ready we should be to make intercession for all men, even for our enemies. The people had deserted Moses and Aaron, had abused and vilified them; yet, as the shepherds of Israel, they continued to pray, and God heard them, and did not destroy the whole congregation, as

he intended to do. Let us learn hence, *to render good for evil*, to do kindnesses for those that are froward and ungrateful, and *pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us.* Aaron stepped in between the people and death with his censer, when thousands were falling around him. He ventured his life to pray for them; and when Aaron appeared, the plague was stayed. We are taught likewise, how good it is to make intercession for others; that God *is a God hearing prayer*, and that *the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* Let us do what we can for our fellow-creatures, even those that may have evil entreated us. To conclude, let us rejoice in Christ Jesus, who in this, as well as in other respects, was abundantly superior to Moses and Aaron. He came to interpose in our behalf; to rescue us from the sword of justice. By presenting his own blood, he made atonement; and by pleading his blood before the throne, he hath obtained redemption and eternal blessings for us. His intercession is as incense in the most holy place above. Let us be thankful for this appointment, and give praise to God for this honourable and endearing method of showing mercy to a guilty people. *Let our souls magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from the wrath to come, and from all iniquity.*

CHAPTER XVII.

It may be thought, that enough had been done in the former chapter to convince the people that Aaron was appointed to be God's priest, and his family to succeed in that office. But Israel was prone to forget the judgments, as well as the mercies of God; and therefore we have here an account of a surprising miracle, the budding of Aaron's rod, intended to increase the conviction, and to be a standing evidence, of this.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, *in order fully and finally to satisfy all their scruples, and take away all pretences and causes of murmuring*, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod, *which they used to carry in their hand in token of authority*, according to the house of [their] fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod, *that is, let it be engraved on the dry rod.* 3 And thou shalt write Aaron's

name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod [shall be] for the head of the house of their fathers; *though I have distinguished the tribe of Levi into two parts, priests and Levites, yet, as in the other tribes there is but one rod for a tribe, so shall it be for the tribe of Levi.* 4 And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you, *and manifest my mind, in order to end the dispute.* 5 And it shall come to pass, [that] the man's rod, whom I shall choose *for the priesthood,* shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you *concerning the priesthood.* 6 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houses, [even] twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron [was] among their rods. 7 And Moses laid up the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness. 8 And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds*. 9 And Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod.

10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not. 11 And Moses did [so:] as the LORD commanded him, so did he†. 12 And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish, *we are ever and anon cut off by some judgment or other, so that in a little while there will be an end of us all.* 13 Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the LORD shall die, *we are cut off for every small offence, and upon every slight occasion:* Shall we be consumed with dying? *Will there be no end of slaying us till we be all destroyed? Or it might be the language of repentance, arising from a full conviction of the divine appointment, and deprecating the divine vengeance.*

* This was evidently miraculous, for no branch of an almond tree, had this been the time of their blossoming, could have produced buds, blossoms, and fruit, all at once.

† It is probable the blossom and fruit continued fresh from one age to another, and so was a standing memorial of the authority of the Aaronic family. The apostle, Heb. ix. 4., hints that it was *in* the ark, according to our translation; but probably the words *in which* refer to the tabernacle in general, for when the ark was brought up to Solomon's temple, it is said the tables of stone only were in it.

REFLECTION.

THE only reflection to be made upon this short chapter is, that the designs of God, in all the dispensations of his providence, whether prosperous or afflictive, is *to take away sin.* The people had murmured, and had been punished. God had, as we read in the last chapter, wrought miracles of wrath; but here a miracle of mercy; both of them designed to prevent a repetition of their foolish and dangerous conduct, v. 5—10. God was not willing they should perish, and therefore gave them fresh warning, which was really an act of very great kindness. It is thus he deals with the church in general, and with particular souls, to this day. The fruit of every affliction is *to take away sin, by purging us from all iniquity.* The goodness of God is designed to lead us to repentance; every memorial that he sets before us, is intended to make us cautious and watchful. If we murmur and rebel against God, we shall die, *shall die the second death.* Let us then *be in subjection to the Father of our spirits, and we shall live for ever.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

This and the following chapter relate to ceremonial observances, and several particulars mentioned before, as the charge of the priests and Levites; the portion of the priests, and of the Levites.

1 AND the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood, *the punishment for any miscarriage about the sanctuary,* ver. 3, 5. 2 And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee, [shall minister] before the tabernacle of witness, *more immediately about the affairs of the tabernacle.* 3 And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die. 4 And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all

the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. 5 And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. 6 And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you [they are] given [as] a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, *to assist you in the servile, laborious part of God's service there.* 7 Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office, for every thing of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office [unto you as] a service of gift, *and to you alone; and therefore let no man charge you with arrogance or usurpation in appropriating this to yourselves, or invade your office;* and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

8. And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, *by reason of the office or service to which, by anointing, thou art consecrated,* and to thy sons by an ordinance for ever. 9 This shall be thine of the most holy things, [reserved] from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, [shall be] most holy for thee and for thy sons. 10 In the most holy [place] shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee. 11 And this [is] thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, *while they remained in their father's house,* by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it, *all that were bought into, or born in thy house; but no stranger, nor hired servant,* Lev. xxii. 10, 11. 12 All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first fruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee. 13 [And] whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat [of] it. 14 Every thing devoted in Israel, *dedicated to God by vow, or otherwise; if they were such things as might be eaten,* (Lev. xxvii. 28.), shall be thine. 15 Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the LORD, [whether it be] of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the first born of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of

unclean beasts shalt thou redeem. 16 And those that are to be redeemed *of men* from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary, which [is] twenty gerahs. 17 But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they [are] holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat [for] an offering made by fire, for a sweet savour unto the LORD. 18 And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine. 19 All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it [is] a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee, *that is, perpetual and unchangeable.* 20 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them; I [am] thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, [even] the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 22 Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, *suffer the punishment of their sin,* and die. 23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: [it shall be] a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. 24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer [as] an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

25 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 26 Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, [even] a tenth [part] of the tithe. 27 And [this] your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though [it were] the corn of the threshing floor, and as the fulness of the wine press, *as if it had been the fruit of your own ground.* 28 Thus ye also, *as well as the other Israelites,* shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD's heave offering to Aaron the priest. 29 Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every

heave offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, [even] the hallowed part thereof out of it. 30 Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the wine press, *free for you to be used as other common things.* 31 And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it [is] your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation. 32 And ye shall bear no sin, *no punishment,* by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die.

CHAPTER XIX.

The water of separation, and the use of it for the purification of the unclean.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 2 This [is] the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein [is] no blemish, [and] upon which never came yoke: 3 And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and [one] shall slay her before his face: 4 And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times: 5 And [one] shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn: 6 And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast [it] into the midst of the burning of the heifer. 7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even. 8 And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even. 9 And a man [that is] clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay [them] up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it [is] a purification for sin. 10 And he that gathered the ashes of the

heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it (*the making and reserving these ashes for a water of separation*) shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever. 11 He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. 12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. 13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness [is] yet upon him. 14 This [is] the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that [is] in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. 15 And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, [is] unclean. 16 And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. 17 And for an unclean [person] they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer, of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: 18 And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip [it] in the water, and sprinkle [it] upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: 19 And the clean [person] shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.

20 But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him: he [is] unclean. 21 And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until the even. 22 And whatsoever the unclean [person] toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth [it] shall be unclean until even.

CHAPTER XX. 1—13.

Next to the history of Jesus Christ, none is more pleasing or instructive than that of Moses, especially as it is related by himself. His modesty and humility are very remarkable; passing over what happened in Pharaoh's court, all his learning and exploits, and not only does not claim the honour of the miracles wrought for Israel, and the deliverances brought to them, but, with the greatest impartiality and integrity, plainly tells us his own faults. We have often read of God's displeasure against Israel, but here against Moses, their leader: a very awful and instructive story.

1 THEN came the children of Israel, [even] the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin, in the first month *of the fortieth year after they were come out of Egypt, as appears by* ver. 28, *compared with* ch. xxxiii. 38., and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam *the prophetess, the sister of Moses,* died there, and was buried there.

2 And there was no water for the congregation, *the water from the rock Horeb* (Exodus xvii.) *had ceased; and no wells could be found:* and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.

3 And, *instead of condoling with them on the loss of their sister,* the people chode with Moses, and spake, *murmuring as their fathers had done, and using the same insolent language,* saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren, *Korah and his company,* died before the LORD! 4 And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? 5 And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it [is] no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither [is] there any water to drink. *They represent Egypt as a good land, and this as an evil place, though they were just on the borders of Canaan.* 6 And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *to seek the divine direction, and deprecate his anger,* and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them. 7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 8 Take thy rod, *with which thou hast done so many wonders,* and gather

thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, *that they may see it is a real miracle, and be affected with it;* and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. *Observe, he was only to speak to the rock, not to strike it.* 9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him; *that is, out of the tabernacle, where it seems it was laid up for a memorial of the miracles that Moses wrought therewith; as was also Aaron's upon the same account,* ch. xvii. 10.

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels*, must we fetch you water out of this rock? *Seeming to arrogate this work to themselves, as if it was done by their own power, and not glorifying God before Israel; therefore* (1 Chron. xxvii. 14.) *it is called rebellion against God's commands.* 11 And Moses, *in the height of his anger,* lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice, *instead of speaking to it, as he was commanded:* and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts [also.]

12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, *or rather, as I think it should be translated, Because ye were not faithful to me, to glorify me in the eyes of the children of Israel,* therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them †. *Alas, whose heart is not affected with this! We hoped to have seen Moses and Aaron lead Israel triumphantly into Canaan; but their sun sets in a cloud, the sentence was passed and punctually fulfilled; Aaron died at the next remove, and Moses in a few months after.* 13 This [is] the water of Meribah, *that is, strife;* because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them; *in Moses and Aaron, by punishing their rebellion, and thereby manifesting the glory of his holiness.*

* This was the language of passionate resentment against the people, for God did not call them so, and Moses ought not to have done it; but, alas! this meekest of men was angry.

† Thus God added a tremendous sanction to the law of Moses; thus he impresses on all the people, and especially upon his ministers and priests, an awful sense of his majesty, and a holy tenderness of soul before him, that they may not arrogate any thing to themselves, but glorify God before all the people. By this God might intend to confirm our faith in a future state of retribution, and intimate to us the imperfection of the Mosaic dispensation, and lead on our thoughts to Christ, the great deliverer.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We have great reason to adore the divine patience, that has borne with us under so many greater and more aggravated crimes than that of Moses. This good man displeased God, and lost all his most agreeable prospects as to this world at once. *Behold the goodness, and* at the same time, *the severity of God!* How often have we, in a worse manner and degree, rebelled against God, disobeyed his orders, trifled in his service, and not been sufficiently careful to sanctify him in our hearts! this the best may say; others of us perhaps have dishonoured our christian profession by wilful sin, yet God hath spared us. He hath not quite disappointed our hopes as to this world, though he might have done it. He still *giveth us food and raiment*, health and peace. He might have deprived us for ever of seeing the heavenly land; might have *sworn in his wrath, ye shall not enter into my rest;* and that after our greatest hopes and expectations. We have reason to acknowledge, that *it is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed; because his compassions fail not.*

2. What need have all, even the best of men, to rule their own spirits, and to be very cautious and watchful. See, in this melancholy instance, how imperfect the graces of good men are, even those graces for which they are most remarkable. Of all sins, we should have thought Moses, *who was the meekest man upon earth*, would never have been guilty of passionate anger; or that he would have *spoken unadvisedly with his lips.* That he, who had borne so long with Israel's provocations (which, to human conception, were almost sufficient to have wearied the divine patience) should at length act thus, was not to have been imagined. But what is man! how frail! how weak! Who dares say that he is secure from danger, when he sees how Moses and Aaron sinned. Let us all keep a guard over our own spirits, and *watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation.* Let aged persons in particular, regard this caution. Perhaps frequent infirmities, and having borne long with the perverseness and wickedness of their generation, may incline them to be peevish and fretful. But let them remember this is very wicked; it is dishonourable to God, and setting a bad example to the rising age. Titus is commanded by Paul to *caution the aged to be sound in faith, in charity,*

and in patience. For orthodoxy or soundness in faith will advantage us nothing, if we are not sound in charity and patience. Let us all watch against a passionate temper, for it leads men to offend with their tongue, to speak what offends God, and injures man, and what they may afterwards repent of. If we find our spirits begin to rise, let us *set a watch before our mouth, and keep the door of our lips,* or else we may speak very unadvisedly. The language of this sad story is, and oh that we may attend to it! *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

3. We learn hence, not to depend on the success of our schemes of usefulness or comfort, so far as earth is concerned in them. Perhaps there was nothing Moses depended on more, than that he should lead Israel into Canaan, and be happy with them there; at least he hoped to see them comfortably settled. When God said, that *of this generation only Joshua and Caleb should see Canaan,* Moses and Aaron might justly think they were not included in the sentence, because they had not despised God's rest. Moses had a cheerful prospect before him, and was greatly pleased with it; he had much ado to bear the disappointment, and prayed to God, earnestly and frequently, to remove the sentence. This was a very grievous case, and he needed great support from God to reconcile him to it; and God graciously told him he would do better things for him. His days were past; his purposes were broken off. We also have our schemes. In such a station we think we should be useful; in such or such a relation we should find comfort for years to come. Every good man, while he has power to act, will contrive to act for God. But the best schemes are uncertain; we cannot promise ourselves lasting happiness here below; *for what is our life? it is even a vapour. The prophets do not live for ever;* they sometimes die, like Moses, when their eye is not dim. We may form schemes and purposes with regard to God, but he may say to us, though we are in the most pleasing circumstances, as he did to Moses and Aaron, *Go up, and die.* Let this teach us to cease from man, to cease from ourselves; and always to say, *If the Lord will, we will do this or that.*

4. Let us rejoice in the security of our views of a better world, whatever disappointments we may meet with in this: this is the anchor of our souls. We mourn over Moses' disappointment; that he only saw the good land, and did not possess it. But Moses and Aaron have not perished. God denied them the lesser favour, and granted them the greater. They possess the

reward they had respect to; the better Canaan. They see God in brighter discoveries than ever Moses did on the holy mountain. They now rejoice in their disappointment, by which God was glorified, and the church edified. We are, through divine goodness, heirs with them of the same promises; have clearer discoveries and better hopes, than Moses had. *Let us, therefore, use all diligence to make our calling and election sure,* knowing *it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do according to his good pleasure. Let us be steadfast and immovable, always abiding and abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour in the Lord shall not be in vain.* Then, whatever schemes for this world may be disappointed, our grand hope will not be in vain. Fear not; God will be our shield. In a word, amidst all the uncertainty of this world, amidst all the darkness that there sometimes is upon the dispensations of Providence, this is clear and certain, that *verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

CHAP. XX. 14, to the end.

The Edomites refuse to let Israel pass through their country; Aaron dies.

14 AND Moses, *by God's direction* (Deut. ii. 1, &c.) sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel*, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us *in this wilderness, and* 15 How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers: 16 And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, *(who appeared to Moses in the burning bush,* Exodus iii. 2.), and hath brought us forth out of Egypt; *God had in a most remarkable manner delivered his people, who were their brethren, and they could not but know it; upon this therefore they ground their request:* and, behold, we [are] in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border: 17 Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither

* Both were descended from Isaac; Esau and Jacob were twins.

will we drink [of] the water of the wells, *which are private property, without paying for it:* we will go by the king's [high] way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders. 18 And Edom, *being afraid of their injuring the country, or taking possession of it,* said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. 19 And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without [doing] any thing [else,] go through on my feet. 20 And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. 21 Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him*.

22 And the children of Israel, [even] the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto mount Hor. 23 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, 24 Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. 25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor: 26 And strip Aaron of his *priestly* garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered [unto his people,] and shall die there. 27 And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount Hor, in the sight of all the congregation†. 28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount, *in an honourable and comfortable manner, in his one hundred and twenty-third year*‡: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. 29 And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, [even] all the house of Israel.

* Nevertheless we are told in Deuteronomy ii. 28, 29., that they bought food of the Edomites while they continued in Kadesh, and while they passed the borders of their country; and God commanded the Israelites not to hurt them, because they were brethren, and cautions them not to abhor an Edomite.

† They would, no doubt, be greatly affected at the loss of their high priest, seeing him thus die by the appointment of God; but they were also witnesses to Eleazar's being appointed his successor; and it would be some comfort to Aaron, that his son succeeded to his office, and that the entail of the priesthood was not cut off from his family.

‡ In Deuteronomy x. 6., it is said, he was buried in Mosera; that was the general name of this station, and Hor the particular mountain.

REFLECTIONS.

1 The conduct of the Israelites towards the Edomites, teaches us to guard against a love of contention and revenge. The Israelites' request was a reasonable one; the Edomites' denial was stiff and unjustifiable; especially considering what God had done for the Israelites. But God directed them to turn another way. Our brethren may use us ill, deny our reasonable requests, and come out against us with a strong hand; but it will be the wisest way not to oppose force to force, if it can be helped. Let us leave off contention, and turn away. The reason which God gives why they should not fall upon the Edomites or abhor them, was, that *they were brethren.* This argument will hold equally strong with us. We are brethren, the descendants of Adam, sons of God, brethren in Christ, united in dearer, tenderer bonds, than any natural alliance or relation can form. Let us rather put ourselves to any inconvenience, as Israel did by going about, than lay a foundation for quarrelling, and going to law, and the like; rather put up with an injury or an insult, than study revenge. If any should think this a hard, impracticable lesson, let them remember, if they do not learn and practise it, they are not faithful disciples of Christ, and shall have no share in the glory of his kingdom.

2. Let the saints of the Lord, like Aaron, be willing to die. There is something very awful in his dying on this side Canaan; but he had a better world in prospect, and therefore went up without reluctance, leaving his robes and honours to his son. Be our character ever so excellent, death will strip us of our garment. *Naked we came into the world, and naked we must go out of it.* Let us labour, like Aaron, to serve God with our spirit. Let us make sure of the heavenly Canaan, and then we may willingly resign our breath when God pleases. Let the thought of death prevent our being too fond of our ornaments and honours, even of those, which, like those of the priesthood, are most important and desirable. Death will strip us of all but our virtues and graces; but it cannot strip us of, nor separate us from, the love of Christ, nor destroy the union which subsists between him and the true believer. Let us be willing to die when God pleases, and leave this world with satisfaction; especially when we see,

as Aaron did, those coming in our room, who will serve God when we are gone.

3. Let us rejoice in the unchangeable priesthood of Jesus Christ. *The priests under the law,* says the apostle, *were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but Christ, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. He is consecrated for evermore.* Heb. vii. 23. Christian ministers also die; *one generation passeth away, and another cometh.* But *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;* and this is a never-failing comfort to the church. May we maintain a believing regard to this eternal High-priest, and rejoice in him as our sacrifice and advocate. And since, in consequence of this unchangeable priesthood, as the apostle observes, *he is able to save to the uttermost,* let us cheerfully *come to God by him, seeing that he ever lives to make intercession for us.*

CHAPTER XXI.

In this chapter the Israelites, proceeding on their march towards Canaan, are stung by fiery serpents, and healed by the brazen serpent, which Moses, by God's direction, made. They conquer Sihon and Og.

1 AND [when] king Arad the Canaanite, *or rather the Canaanite king of Arad, whom Joshua afterwards destroyed,* (see Joshua xii. 14. Judges i. 16.), which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies, *that is, the way the spies came thirty-eight years before, and since then called by that name;* then he fought against Israel, and took [some] of them prisoners. 2 And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities, *destroy the people and beasts, and burn the cities; reserving nothing for our own use, but bringing the spoils to God's treasury.* 3 And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites, *this army of Arad:* and they utterly destroyed them and their cities, *they now conquered this army and destroyed them*; *and afterwards when they conquered their cities, destroyed them also:* and he, *that is, Israel,* called the name of the place Hormah, *that is, devotement, or utter destruction; by which name they both set up a memorial of God's mercy, and their duty to keep the vow they had made.*

4 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom, *because they were denied a passage through the land,* ch. xx. 18, 20., and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way, *the length of it, and the many wants and troubles they met with therein.* 5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for [there is] no bread, neither [is there any] water; and our soul loatheth this light bread; *as if it had little substance or nourishment in it in comparison of that more solid diet they had in Egypt; an old complaint, and a shameful falsehood.* 6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died*.

7 Therefore the people came to Moses, *and made an humble and particular acknowledgment of their guilt,* and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, *like those which bite them,* and set it upon a pole, *like an ensign, that it may be seen through all the camp:* and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live, *though he be not able to go near it*†. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived‡.

10 And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in Oboth. 11 And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched at Ijeabarim, in the wilderness which [is] before Moab, toward the sun rising. 12 From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zared. 13 From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, which [is] in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites: for Arnon [is] the border of

* STRABO and other geographers tell us, that this wilderness abounded with serpents of a bright shining colour, which gave an incurable wound. We read also of serpents in the West Indies, as red as blood, which appear at night like burning coals. Such as these God made use of to chastise this murmuring people.

† Naturalists observe, that the sight of the brazen serpent tended, of itself, rather to increase the disease, and to fill them with greater anguish, by disturbing their imaginations. If so, it was the more proper to convince the Israelites that their medicine came from God, who made that, whose aspect was hurtful, to be a means of their cure.—JAMESON.

‡ The serpents were not taken away; but were left to try their faith, and punish their guilt. The Indians have an idol, like a serpent, placed on a large pole, which they worship. Esculapius, the god of health, among the Greeks, and Salus, a great physician, among the Romans, are both pictured with serpents, as an emblem of their healing power, perhaps in reference to this story.

Moab, between Moab and the Amorites*. Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the LORD, What he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, 15 And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab. 16 And from thence [they went] to Beer: that [is] the well whereof the LORD spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water *miraculously, without their asking for it.* 17 Then Israel sang this song, *a song of praise for giving them this seasonable supply, and they said,* Spring up, O well, *continue still to spring up, and supply us with water; and then, calling to others, they said,* Sing ye unto it, *express your joy and thankfulness in a song which may never be forgotten. Such responses were the usual way of singing praises among the Jews.* 18 The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by [the direction] of the law-giver, with their staves, *that is, the heads of the tribes struck the earth, or ran the ends of their sceptres into the ground, by the direction of Moses, and the water sprung out.* And from the wilderness [they went] to Mattanah; 19 And from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth: 20 And from Bamoth [in] the valley, that [is] in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, *or rather, the foot of Pisgah, or valley where it began to rise,* which looketh toward Jeshimon, *or the wilderness.*

21 And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, 22 Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink [of] the waters of the well: [but] we will go along by the king's [high] way, until we be past thy borders. 23 And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel. 24 And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon [was] strong, *well defended, therefore Sihon had not encroached on their country, as he had upon the Moabites.* 25 And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof. 26 For Heshbon [was] the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand,

* They were so near to Moab as to have provisions from their country.

even unto Arnon*. Wherefore they that speak in proverbs, *in poems or histories*, say, Come into Heshbon, *though formerly you were afraid to dwell in it, yet now ye may come safely without fear*, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared: 28 For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon, *the fury of war*, it hath consumed Ar of Moab, *or those that dwell in a strong and fortified place*, [and] the lords of the high places of Arnon, *the princes, priests, and idols of the Moabites are all destroyed as far as Arnon.* 29 Woe to thee, Moab! thou art undone, O people of Chemosh, *the idol god of the Moabites;* he hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites; *instead of protecting and defending them, as they expected, he has suffered them to be led away captive.* 30 We have shot at them; Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which [reacheth] unto Medeba, *first the Amorites, and then the Israelites*†. 31 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. 32 And Moses sent to spy out Jaazar, *another city of the Moabites taken by the Amorites*, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that [were] there.

33 And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan, *a rich and fruitful country, abounding with fine pastures and large cattle;* and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei. 34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not, *though he be a giant*, (Deut. iii. 11.), for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. 35 So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land.

REFLECTIONS.

1 IF we would expect particular favours from God, we should lay ourselves under solemn obligations to obey his will. *And Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou wilt indeed*

* Moses from hence to the end of *v.* 30. proves, that both Heshbon and the country adjoining to it, was the possession of Sihon, when the Israelites took it; Sihon having taken it from the former king of the Moabites, who was king before Balak. Jephthah pleads this afterwards, in Judges xi. 12.

† Some suppose this verse a triumphant addition of the Israelites, *We have shot at them*, or rather, *we have overthrown them with our arrows by the strength of Jehovah.*

deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. Israel resolved to obey his orders, and then God heard their prayers. In this disposition of mind let us seek mercy; it is a proper frame in which to receive it from the LORD. The design of his mercies, is to bring us to obedience; and they should be improved to this purpose. If we be willing and obedient, we shall enjoy such and such blessings. The Lord is with us while we are with him; he is ready to favour us, while we are ready and disposed to serve him, and to use our mercies for his honour.

2. *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also was the Son of Man lifted up; that whoso believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* No one can doubt the propriety of this reflection, for it is Christ's own, in John iii. 14. The Jewish doctors were puzzled about this story, and how to account for this appointment; but the New Testament clears it up; it is a type of Christ. We are wounded by sin and Satan, by the fiery darts of the old serpent, and God himself hath contrived and appointed a remedy, even Christ. *He was lifted up on the cross,* that we may look to him and be saved. Are we sensible of the wounds of sin, and our danger from them? let us solemnly apply to Christ, who was lifted up to *draw all men unto him.* If the wounded Israelites did not look upon the brazen serpent they died; so shall we, except we look to Christ. There is no other way to obtain healing and salvation. Let us therefore look to him, though with weak faith, and a trembling eye, and we shall find him *able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.*

3. Let the hand of God be acknowledged in all our deliverances, and all our supplies. Let us review the series of mercies we have experienced, in every stage of our journey through life; what deliverances from enemies we have had; how he hath opened his bountiful hand, and satisfied our desires; how much better he hath been to us than our fears; and how often he hath given us favours before we asked them. Let us keep up a memorial of the divine goodness, and labour to impress our hearts with it; let us set up our Ebenezers, and give God glory for our national, as well as personal deliverances; and that, not only when fresh and lately done, but let us always keep the remembrance of them, and adore that mercy to which they are owing, as in Psalm cxxxvi. 17—22. *To him which smote great kings; and*

slew famous kings. Sihon king of the Amorites; and Og the king of Bashan: and gave their land for an heritage, even an heritage unto Israel his servant; for his mercy endureth for ever.

CHAPTER XXII.

In Exodus xv. 15. Moses foretold, that trembling should take hold of the mighty men of Moab, when they heard of Israel's victories and success: this chapter shows how the prophecy was fulfilled; which introduces the history of Balak and Balaam.

1 AND the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan [by] Jericho, *which was their last encampment, where they continued till Moses died, and Joshua led them over Jordan.*

2 And Balak the son of Zippor, *the king of Moab, who had been driven out of his country by Sihon, whom Israel had conquered,* saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they [were] many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel; *probably not knowing that Moses had a command to spare Moab, and taking it for granted that Israel would ruin them like the other nations;* 4 And *with a view to communicate this fear to the Midianites,* Moab said unto the elders of Midian, *(not those who lived near mount Sinai where Jethro was, but a colony near Moab, who were descended from Abraham by Keturah, but having forgotten the God of their fathers, joined with Moab against their brethren.)* Now shall this company lick up all [that are] round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field, *they will easily and entirely root us out as they have done other nations.* And Balak the son of Zippor [was] king of the Moabites at that time. 5 He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor*, which [is] by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide

* A city of Mesopotamia, the country from whence Abraham came.

over against me*: 6 Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they [are] too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, [that] we may smite them, and [that] I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest [is] blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed†. 7 And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak. 8 And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the LORD shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam; *he was allured by the reward, and pretended to consult God in the matter.* 9 And God came unto Balaam, *perhaps in a dream, as he did to Abimelech, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and others,* and said, What [men] are these with thee? 10 And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me [saying,] 11 Behold, [there is] a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out. 12 And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people, for they [are] blessed. *This might have been enough to have convinced him of the folly and wickedness of entertaining any thought of this business.* 13 And Balaam, *under the impression of this dream or vision,* rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you, *delivering only part of the message, and saying nothing about their being blessed, which might have prevented their sending again: he secretly intimated that he would be glad to go, but his God would not give him leave at present.* 14 And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us. 15 And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they. 16 And they came to Balaam and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me:

* It is probable that Balaam was at first a prophet of the true God, and had extraordinary converse with him, and communications from him; but abusing this to covetous purposes, God gave him up to strong delusions, to use charms and enchantments. Thus he still kept up a form of conversing with God, who in this instance manifested himself to him, and over-ruled his evil inclinations. He was a man of no honesty, and by profession a diviner; and pretending to have great interest with heaven, Balak thought his blessing or curse would be effectual.

† The ancients before they entered on war, used in a solemn manner to curse their enemies. Among the Romans there was an officer whose business it was to do this, and their forms of execration are still on record.—PLIN. Hist. L. xxviii. c. 2. MACROB. Saturn. L. iii. c. 9.

17 For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; *sending him a more urgent message, greater men, more money, and larger promises, he imagined might prevail upon him.* 18 And Balaam, *making an excellent reply, if he had but kept to it,* answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more, *that is, any thing at all.* 19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more, *hereby plainly discovering that he longed for the money and rewards; he therefore detained the messengers, hoping that God would at length give him leave to go.*

20 And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, [and] go with them, *follow thy own evil inclinations, I will leave thee to thy own folly, and thy punishment;* but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do, *and I will make thee bless those whom thou desirest to curse.* 21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. 22 And God's anger was kindled because he went *with the wicked intention of getting money for cursing Israel; the princes of Moab probably went before, and he followed; and God took the following astonishing method to let him know his displeasure:* and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants [were] with him. 23 And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. 24 But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall [being] on this side, and a wall on that side. 25 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. 26 And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where [was] no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. 27 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. 28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, *bestowed upon her the power of speech and reason for that time,* (2 Peter ii. 16.), and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? 29 And

Balaam, *mad with anger, and without considering this extraordinary circumstance,* said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee *. 30 And the ass said unto Balaam, [Am] not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since [I was] thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. 31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. 32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because [thy] way is perverse before me: 33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive. 34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again; *an impertinent, trifling supposition, since God had manifested his dislike of it again and again, which betrayed his unwillingness to return.* 35 And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men, *since thy heart is set upon it:* but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak †.

36 And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he *showed him all possible respect, and* went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which [is] in the border of Arnon, which [is] in the utmost coast. 37 And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? Am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour? 38 And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak, *I must do as God would have me, I cannot help it.* 39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjath-huzoth, *a city of streets, or a large city, perhaps the capital of the country.* 40 And Balak offered oxen and sheep, *not as sacrifices, but to make a feast,* and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that [were] with him. 41 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the

* Balaam's was the language of passion, therefore the apostle *Peter* says, *the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness of the prophet,* 2 Peter ii. 16.

† Some of the Jewish writers suppose all this happened in a vision, but the words of scripture are very express. God could easily work such a miracle; and the apostle Peter expressly asserts it, 2 Peter ii. 15, 16.

high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost [part] of the people, *and that the sight of so numerous an army ready to enter his country, might engage him to curse them.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. We may learn from hence, what a dangerous thing the love of money is. Balaam could not but know what God had done for Israel, that they were his favourite people; yet he was willing to do them mischief. The reason is given, 2 Peter ii. 15., *He loved the wages of unrighteousness.* Another apostle says, *He ran wickedly into error, for the reward,* that is, earnestly desired to act contrary to God's will. *The love of money is the root of all evil.* This could seduce a prophet from the ways of God; lead him to provoke Jehovah, and make him desirous to curse Israel. May we, therefore, guard against it, and *not love the world, nor the things of the world;* but reject its offers with an holy disdain, especially when tendered as the price of our integrity, and of the favour of God. Let us not parley with temptation, as Balaam did, but say, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* God grant we may not be of the number of those who prefer gain to godliness, or who *bless the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.*

2. We see in the instance before us, what a show of religion a very bad man may put on. Balaam calls the Lord his God, professes a great veneration for his authority, dares say nothing but what God bids him; yet he seems to have been an impious wretch, that feared not God. If Balak would give him a house full of silver, he declared he would not offend God; and yet he appears to have been exceeding loth to do what God bid him. Many call the Lord, their God, boast of their relation to him, and expectations from him, and have good words in their mouths, but their hearts are full of wickedness. They may deceive others, and deceive themselves, but *God will not be mocked.* He saw through Balaam's disguise; observed his wickedness; and sees the most secret hypocrisy. Let us guard, therefore, against an hypocritical mask, and pray God to *search us and try us, and see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting.*

3. We see how God can manifest his power in his creatures, and make them the instruments of carrying on his purposes. How surprising was God's operation on the organs of the brute

creature here mentioned! He changed its braying into plain, wise, and pertinent words. This was from the Lord, who *made man's mouth, and teacheth him to speak.* We see, too, how he ruled the heart of this wicked prophet; he prevented, by constraint, Balaam's compliance with Balak's wicked intentions. God has the hearts and tongues of men and beasts in his hand, and *can turn them which way he pleaseth.* Let us reverence him, for *he doeth according to his sovereign, wise, and righteous will, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this lower world.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

It is the observation of an inspired writer, 'Let favour be showed to a wicked man, yet will he not learn righteousness;' so it was with Balaam. In this chapter he makes two attempts to curse Israel, and is defeated; yet he prepared for a third.

1 AND Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen, and seven rams *. 2 And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on [every] altar a bullock and a ram. 3 And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go *to some solitary and convenient place;* peradventure the LORD will come to meet me: and whatsoever he showeth me, I will tell thee. 4 And he went to an high place. And God met Balaam: and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon [every] altar a bullock and a ram, *let this service move thee to comply with our desire.* 5 And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, *that is, suggested to him what he should say, though contrary to his own inclinations,* and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak. 6 And he returned unto him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab, *waiting to receive the divine message.*

7 And he took up his parable, *that is, a grave, instructive speech, dressed up in figurative expressions, and delivered in a sub-*

* Instead of dissuading the king from his wicked purpose, he contrives with him how to accomplish it; they built seven altars upon the high places of Baal; they worshipped the sun, or Baal; and the seven altars were built to the seven planets; on these they offered sacrifices to Jehovah to obtain leave to curse Israel; but it was a foolish and wicked attempt.

lime and majestic manner, and *he* said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, *that is, Mesopotamia,* (Deut. xxiii. 4.), out of the mountains of the east, [saying,] Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. 8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, [whom] the LORD hath not defied? *Owning that his design was defeated, that it was a vain attempt to injure Israel, and that Balak desired what was impossible.* 9 For from the top of the rocks I see him, *that is, Israel, and indeed the very sight is full of majesty and terror, such as makes it evident that God hath blessed them;* and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations, *shall be a distinct people, have different laws, religion, and manners; in the land of Canaan they shall be sufficiently provided for, and protected by God himself; so that they shall neither need the friendship, nor fear the terror, of other men.* 10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, *their vast multitudes, which are like the dust of the earth,* and the number of the fourth [part] of Israel, *one of their four squadrons? for into so many was their camp divided: he then adds,* Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his*.

11 And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed [them] altogether. 12 And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth? *Would it be safe for me to act contrary to his directions?* 13 And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence. *Balak thought, that Balaam, terrified at seeing such a multitude, durst not meddle with them, and therefore would have him to see only a part, that he might have them cursed, and then he would attack them first; and Balaam, thinking he might be permitted to curse a part of them, agreed to the proposal.* 14 And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on [every] altar. 15 And he said unto Balak, Stand here by the burnt offering, while I meet [the LORD] yonder. 16 And the LORD† met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth,

* Balaam believed the immortality of the soul; and was so far from cursing a people who were directed to walk in righteousness and holiness, that he desired to die like the righteous among them; or, as the LXX renders it, *to be as prosperous and happy as they were.*

† The LORD, that is, JEHOVAH, met him: it was a different appearance to the

and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus. 17 And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath the LORD spoken?

18 And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor: 19 God [is] not a man, that he should lie, *or fail in the performance of what he hath spoken;* neither the son of man, that he should repent, *so as to change his purpose;* hath he said, and shall he not do [it?] or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? *It is in vain for thee ever to expect he will alter his purpose.* 20 Behold, I have received [commandment] to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. 21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel*; the LORD his God [is] with him, and the shout of a king [is] among them, *such a shout as the people make when a victorious prince comes among them.* 22 God brought them out of Egypt *when they had no strength*; *even then, through him, they were victorious, but now* he, *that is, Israel,* hath as it were the strength of an unicorn, *or rhinoceros, who then can prevail against them?* 23 Surely [there is] no enchantment against Jacob, neither [is there] any divination against Israel: according to this time, *from this time forward,* it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! *How wonderful and glorious are those works which God is now about to do for them, which will be matter of discourse and admiration to all ages!* 24 Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion *to fight, and seize the prey:* he shall not lie down until he eat [of] the prey, and drink the blood of the slain, *he shall not cease fighting and pursuing till the enemy is conquered, and the prey seized. Instead of cursing them, he foretells their success, and that all their enemies should be destroyed.*

25 And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. 26 But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the LORD speaketh, that I must do? 27 And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray

former, and so terrified him, that he never went afterwards to inquire of God. He was now fully convinced that Israel was blessed, and that it was impossible to injure them.

* This means, that he hath turned away his eyes from it, and pardoned them. Or, he hath not seen any such idolatry (to which *iniquity* often refers) or any other such sin, as may make him utterly to forsake, curse, and destroy them. Others think the meaning is, that he will not see iniquity practised, or perverse counsels used against Israel, without punishing it, and defending them.

thee, I will bring thee unto another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence. 28 And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor*, that looketh toward Jeshimon. 29 And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams. 30 And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on [every] altar.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We see how restless is the malice of the church's enemies; how eager Balak is to have Israel cursed: he leaves no method or place untried, and spares no expense of sacrifices. He did not know that Israel would attack him; but he harboured mischief against them. How implacable are the hearts of wicked men against the church of God! But it is nothing new; David observes, *the wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him,* Psa. xxxvii. 32.

2. How powerful and glorious is God, the church's friend. *The Lord their God is with them,* saith Balaam, so that it signifies nothing to attempt to injure them. God had blessed Israel, and there was no reversing it. The blessings of heaven are above all the curses of hell; God will baffle all designs against his people; he will sit in heaven and laugh at them. Israel and Moses did not know what Balaam and Balak were doing, but God knew, and disappointed them. They were safe with such a friend; the gates of hell could not prevail; *no weapon formed against them could prosper. Say to Sion, Thy God reigneth.* And let this be the church's comfort in every danger, that *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.*

3. See how reasonable it is, that we should *continue instant in prayer, and watch thereunto with thanksgiving.* How unwearied was Balak in building altars, and in presenting sacrifices, to supplicate leave to destroy Israel! Should not we then *pray without ceasing; pray always, and not faint,* not be weary of God's service, when it is to obtain a blessing for ourselves or our friends, and when we are sure of succeeding if we ask in sincerity and truth? Religious exercises should never be deemed a labour, since their object is, to secure the blessing of God, *who is*

* This was the most famous place in all the country of Moab, where, probably, Baal had a temple; hence it is called Baal-Peor.

able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think.

4. See the danger men are in of deceiving themselves: Balaam covered all his evil designs against Israel with a show of devotion; boasted of his sacrifices, *v.* 4., and thought God was so much profited by him, that he could not refuse to give him leave to curse his people. He had a good opinion of Israel, and yet wished them ill; acknowledged that the righteous were happy after death, and desired to die like them; yet still he persisted in his wicked designs. He had a deep sense of God and religion, of death and a future state, and yet preferred the *wages of unrighteousness;* he wished to *die like the righteous,* but would not live like them. This is the case of too many in the world; they would be glad to go to heaven when they die, but neglect religion, which alone can bring them thither. 'So absurdly do men act,' as Bp. BUTLER expresses it, 'doing violence to their own reason, and acting contrary to their very nature; such cheats do men put on their own souls! Balaam could undoubtedly have no good hope, and yet his partial regard to duty, and his form of religion kept him from absolute despair.' It is to be feared, that too many are for making a composition with God. Such of his commands as suit their inclinations, they will obey; but as to others, they will make all the atonement in their power, and rest in faint resolves, that sometime or other they will be universally good. When men are thus wicked with deliberation and thought, it is owing to such self-deceit as proceeds from a dishonest heart, and shows that they are still strangers to the grace of God, and by no means fit for the kingdom of heaven. Let us, therefore, guard our hearts, and be careful that we are not deceived; for if we desire to *die the death of the righteous,* we must live like them, and *be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness;* or else our wishes, and prayers, and partial reformation, will *be an abomination to the Lord,* and only *increase our condemnation.*

5. Let us rejoice in God, as the eternal and unchangeable Jehovah. *God is not a man, that he should lie;* is not a fickle or inconstant being; his word will stand for ever, his promise is true and faithful. We may confide in him. He will never alter the nature of his requirements, nor contradict himself; *he keepeth covenant for ever.* Let this afford the sincere christian strong consolation, that *God is the father of lights, and in him is no variableness, nor even the shadow of a change.*

6. The deliverances that God hath wrought out for his church,

should be thankfully remembered and acknowledged, *v.* 23. *Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this time it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, What hath God wrought!* We should admire and celebrate his works of wonder, especially the instances in which he appeared to baffle the designs of the craftiest enemies of his church. We in this nation have peculiar reason to say, with wonder and gratitude, *What hath God wrought!* Our enemies themselves own that he hath done great things for us. Israel is called upon to remember what Balak designed to do; and we shall be peculiarly inexcusable, if we, for whom God hath so frequently and so remarkably appeared, do not *know the righteousness of the Lord.* Let God have the praise of all our mercies; and may we always adore Him *who sitteth upon the circle of heaven,* guarding his church with a watchful eye, and causing (as in the instance before us) *the wrath of man to praise him.*

CHAPTER XXIV.

We have here the conclusion of the business between Balaam and Balak.

1 AND when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness, *where Israel was encamped, waiting for what God would suggest to him on this occasion.* 2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding [in his tents] according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him *in an extraordinary manner, and differently from what it did before.* 3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said, *even he, who was bent upon cursing Israel, must and will affirm it, that they shall be blessed,* and the man whose eyes are open hath said, *whose understanding God has in a supernatural manner enlightened to discern what is to happen to the Israelites in future ages:* 4 He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling [into a trance,] but having his eyes open, *that is, having a clear apprehension of things, though the vision of the Lord,* (*see* chap. xxii. 35. chap. xxiii. 16.), *was so glorious, that he could not but fall under it. Then viewing Israel encamped in their proper*

divisions, he said, 5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, [and] thy tabernacles, O Israel! 6 As the valleys are they spread forth, *or stretched out* as gardens by the river's side, *which are peculiarly beautiful,* as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, [and] as cedar trees beside the waters*. 7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, *or clouds,* and his seed [shall be] in many waters, *that is, God shall water this beautiful garden and make it exceeding fruitful;* and his king shall be higher than Agag, *have a greater name than any of the kings of the Amalekites,* and his kingdom shall be exalted†. 8 God brought him forth out of Egypt, he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce [them] through with his arrows, *as easily as a rhinoceros destroys his prey.* 9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion; who shall stir him up‡? Blessed [is] he that blesseth thee, and cursed [is] he that curseth thee.

10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together, *with a mixture of grief and indignation:* and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed [them] these three times. 11 Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the LORD, *whom thou pretendest to obey,* hath kept thee back from honour. 12 And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, 13 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do [either] good or bad of mine own mind; [but] what the LORD saith, that will I speak; *thus endeavouring to moderate Balak's anger, and to obtain a patient hearing of what he was farther going to say.* 14 And now, behold, I go unto my people: come [therefore, and] I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

15 And, *after a solemn pause,* he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: 16 He hath said which heard the words of God,

* Sweet-smelling trees in Arabia and India, which grew naturally without culture, and were stately, fragrant, and useful.

† This was fulfilled in the days of David, when the Amalekites were destroyed.

‡ These were Jacob's words concerning Judah; he may lie any where, without shelter or fear, none dare awake or provoke him. Having conquered the Canaanites, and taken possession of their land, he shall securely and quietly rest and settle himself there. He then adds the blessing which Isaac pronounced upon Jacob their ancestor.

and knew the knowledge of the Most High, [which] saw the vision of the Almighty, falling [into a trance,] but having his eyes open: 17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh, *that is, the Messiah, whom he probably saw in a vision, and therefore broke out in this abrupt manner, I shall behold him but not nigh, at a great distance off, many ages to come:* there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel *, and shall smite the corners of Moab, *or smite through the princes of Moab,* and destroy all the children of Sheth †.

18 And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly, *the church or kingdom of Christ shall prevail over all his enemies.* 19 Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, *who shall be a very exalted prince, and have the government upon his shoulders,* and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city, *those who are fled to the best fortified places, and make the strongest resistance.*

20 And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek [was] the first of the nations, *the most powerful, or the first that made war against Israel,* but his latter end [shall be] that he perish for ever, *he shall be rooted out from the face of the earth; which was fulfilled in the days of Saul and David.*

21 And he looked on the Kenites, *the posterity or kindred of Jethro;* and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock, *their dwelling was in a mountainous country with many natural fortresses.* 22 Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive‡. 23 And, *after another solemn pause,* he took up his parable, and said, Alas! who shall live when God doeth this! *What miserable times will these be! who shall keep his heart from fainting under such miserable calamities! and how few shall escape the sword and the captivity!* 24 And ships [shall come] from the coast of Chittim, *whose posterity were settled in Greece and Italy,*

* A king of the seed and posterity of Jacob, who shall shine as a star in the resplendent glory of his person and kingdom, meaning David or Solomon, as types of Christ, but chiefly Christ himself, Rev. xxii. 16. John i. 9.

† These last words lead me to apprehend, that the whole of this is a prophecy of Christ. The children of Sheth, mean all mankind; and instead of *destroy*, it should be rendered, *rule over*. He shall establish an universal kingdom, in which there shall be no distinction of Jews and Gentiles; he shall rule over all the nations of the earth.

‡ They were wasted by frequent attacks, till the Assyrians carried them away, when they carried captive the ten tribes.

and shall afflict Asshur, *the Assyrians*, and shall afflict Eber, *the Hebrews*, and he also, *that is, Chittim*, shall perish for ever*.

25 And Balaam, *after giving the king this wicked advice*, rose up, and went and returned to his place, *and was soon after slain by the Midianites:* and Balak also went his way.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We may learn what little stress is to be laid on the natural abilities of a bad man. Balaam perhaps was a wise, artful man, had been favoured with extraordinary revelations, and saw visions; yet he was a very wicked wretch. It signifies nothing to profess to know God, if *in works we deny him*. An enlightened understanding, without a sanctified heart, will only serve to make us more miserable. *Could we understand all mysteries, have all knowledge, and all revelations, yet without charity*, without love to God and man, *we are nothing:* like Balaam, entirely deficient, unless the heart be upright, and free from malice and covetousness.

2. Observe God's love to his church, and the gracious manner in which he over-rules the devices of men. He again obliges Balaam to bless those he intended to curse. How precious were Israel's tents in the sight of God. Moses calls upon Israel to remember this, how Balak hired Balaam to curse them; but the Lord their God turned the curse into a blessing. God watches over his church, frustrates the designs of its enemies; and turns their counsels into foolishness. The church is his garden, his vineyard, a fragrant, fruitful plantation *of his own planting*. He will pour out water upon it; his ordinances and Spirit shall make it fruitful. He will wall it about, to keep it from enemies, and water it every moment. From him our fruit is found. Let the church rejoice in its friend and protector, and wait on God for her salvation.

3. Let us rejoice that this remarkable prophecy of Balaam is so far fulfilled, and hope for the accomplishment of the rest.

* The first of these seems to refer to the expedition of Alexander the Great, who, in 1 Mac. i. 1., is said to come from Kittim. He destroyed the Medes and Persians, who had subdued the Assyrians and Babylonians. The Romans also after Christ's time, in the reign of Trajan, overcame the remains of the Assyrians, and made that country a province. The last passage, *and shall afflict* Eber, refers to the Romans, who came from Kittim, that is, Italy, in ships, and destroyed the Jews under Vespasian. *And he also*, that is, the Roman empire, *shall perish for ever*, shall be entirely destroyed. This event is yet to come.

Christ arose as a *Star out of Jacob*, bright and illustrious; brought many nations under his government; diffused his light through many parts of the world; ordered his gospel to be preached to every creature, that is, to all the nations of the earth. Let us be thankful for his reviving beams, walk in their light, and expect a further spread of them, even *from sea to sea, and from shore to shore;* a time, when all nations shall fly to his church, as doves to the windows, and the whole world shall be obedient to the faith. Let us also reflect with pleasure, that antichrist shall be destroyed to make way for this event; that the power of the Romish church shall be broken, and papal authority be quite destroyed. Should the pope, like Balaam, labour to curse God's Israel, for the sake of unrighteous gain; the curse causeless shall not come; though they curse, God will bless. His church shall continue, nor shall the gates of Rome or hell prevail against it. That tyrannical and wicked power shall be destroyed, and so way shall be made for the conversion of the Jews, and the calling in of the Gentiles. A glorious day shall then dawn, when all *the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his anointed. But who shall live when God doeth all this?*

CHAPTER XXV.

The Israelites' wickedness and idolatry; Zimri and Cozbi slain.

1 AND Israel abode in Shittim, *their last encampment, before they entered Canaan, just on the borders of Jordan,* and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab *and Midian.* 2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods; *the daughters of Moab and Midian invited them to their idolatrous feasts, whereby at length they were drawn to open idolatry; and this was done by the advice of Balaam,* ch. xxxi. 16. Rev. ii. 14. 3 And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor, *that is, to Baal, who was worshipped on the hill Peor. They joined in his worship and service, eat of the sacrifices which were offered to him, and fell in with all the unclean rites which were practised by his worshippers;* and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. 4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads

of the people, *such as were the ringleaders in these sins; or rather, call the princes and elders together, let them examine into the matter,* and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, *that is, hang the guilty in the face of the sun, which they have worshipped under the name of Baal,* that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel. 5 And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, *to the rulers of thousands, and hundreds, and tens, who assisted him in the government,* Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor, *spare none under your particular district, whom you have found guilty.*

6 And, behold, one of the children of Israel, *who was not contented with going himself to these lewd women,* came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who [were] weeping [before] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *bewailing the abominable wickedness of the people, and the dreadful judgments of God, and imploring his mercy.* 7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw [it,] he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; 8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and, *in the greatness of his zeal,* thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. 9 And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand*.

10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. 12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace, *make it publicly known, for his encouragement, that I establish him in the priest's office, which is called in* Malachi ii. 5., *the covenant of life and peace.* 13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, [even] the covenant of an everlasting priesthood†; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel‡. 14 Now the name of the Israelite that

* The apostle says, 1 Cor. x. 8., twenty-three thousand; so many died of the plague, and one thousand by the hand of the magistrates. It is probable that the judges did not execute their commission with sufficient zeal, therefore God took the work into his own hands.

† This promise was conditional, for Eli was not of his family. In David's time, however, it returned to them again, and continued, probably, till the time of Christ.

‡ God knew that he acted out of love to him, and zeal for his honour; though the action itself was rash and unwarrantable, as he was not a judge or a magistrate

was slain, [even] that was slain with the Midianitish woman, [was] Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites*. 15 And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain [was] Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he [was] head over a people, [and] of a chief house in Midian, *and yet did not scruple to prostitute his daughter, in order to lead Israel into sin and ruin.*

16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17 Vex the Midianites, and smite them, *treat them as enemies:* 18 For they vex you with their wiles; *under pretence of kindred, friendship, leagues, and marriages, they insinuate themselves with you, and draw you to sin, and so bring a curse upon you;* wherewith they have beguiled you *to idolatry* in the matter of Peor, and *to commit whoredom* in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake†.

REFLECTIONS.

1. SEE what reason we have to guard against fleshly lusts, and what danger attends the indulgence of them. *Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.* 1 Cor. x. 8. Sensual indulgences lead men to all manner of irreligion; they take away the heart, and make men stupid and thoughtless. Israel, that had overcome the force of the Amalekites and Amorites, and whom Balaam durst not attack by open force, are inveigled and ruined by the charms of the daughters of Moab. Bp. HALL observes on this story, that 'it is the common custom of Satan, to raise advantage to himself from the fairest pieces of the workmanship of God.' *Lust is conceived, and it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death,* as in the case before us. Solomon has observed, from the experience of many, and his own in particular, that *strange women,* women of no principle, of fair faces but foul dispositions, *have cast down many wounded, yea,*

unless he had a divine commission, which does not seem unlikely, from the approbation with which God speaks of him and his conduct.

* JOSEPHUS says, he was one who had a right to stand with Moses and Aaron in the government of the people; he ought to have ordered the judges of his tribe to punish the offenders, but instead of this, he countenanced them in a shameful manner.

† The Moabites were equally guilty, but their punishment was reserved till afterwards, as Balaam prophesied.

many strong men have been slain by them. The God of purity and holiness is highly displeased with such irregular indulgences, as they debase our rational nature, and dishonour our christian profession. *Fornicators and adulterers God will judge; they shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Let us, therefore, *as pilgrims and strangers, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.*

2. Zeal for the honour of God, and the suppression of vice, is highly commendable, especially in times of great degeneracy. Phinehas was zealous for God, and he conferred peculiar honours upon him. The people behaved well in weeping and lamenting their wickedness, and deprecating the judgments of the Lord; but Phinehas acted a more worthy and excellent part. It is good to lament the wickedness of others, to grieve when we behold transgressors; but they are most acceptable to God, who appear and act boldly in his cause. Christian ministers and magistrates are peculiarly obliged to appear on the Lord's side. *It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing;* and we have reason to believe, that God will more readily forgive a too fervent zeal for him and his cause, if such can be, than coldness and indifference.

3. We see Solomon's remark verified, that *righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is the reproach and ruin of any people.* Balaam and Balak could not hurt Israel, while there was no iniquity or perverseness found in them; but no sooner are their minds and their morals corrupted, than the plague breaks in upon them. *Evil communications corrupt good manners,* and introduce shameful vices, and so a flood-gate is opened for all dreadful calamities to enter in. They are the worst enemies a man can have who draw him to sin; they are the worst enemies to a nation, who tempt others to sin, and labour to make them children of hell. Our duty, as christians, is to avoid sin as much as possible ourselves, and to do all we can to prevent it in others, knowing that it will, sooner or later, bring inevitable ruin upon them.

CHAPTER XXVI.

This chapter is principally taken up in numbering the people in the plains of Moab; in which we may observe the righteousness, fidelity, and goodness of God. His righteousness, in fulfilling his threatenings; his fidelity to Caleb and Joshua; and his abundant goodness, in sparing Israel, and multiplying them so, that they were almost as many as at Sinai; all middle-aged, strong men, fit for war, and well instructed in the law of God.

1 AND it came to pass after the plague, that the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, 2 Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel. 3 And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab by Jordan [near] Jericho, saying, 4 [Take the sum of the people,] from twenty years old and upward; as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt.

5 Reuben, the eldest son of Israel: the children of Reuben; Hanoch, [of whom cometh] the family of the Hanochites: of Pallu, the family of the Palluites: 6 Of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Carmi, the family of the Carmites. 7 These [are] the families of the Reubenites: and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty. 8 And the sons of Pallu; Eliab. 9 And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This [is that] Dathan and Abiram, [which were] famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD: 10 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. 11 Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not.

12 The sons of Simeon after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites: of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites: of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites: 13 Of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites: of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. 14 These

[are] the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred.

15 The children of Gad after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites: of Haggi, the family of the Haggites: of Shuni, the family of the Shunites: 16 Of Ozni, the family of the Oznites: of Eri, the family of the Erites: 17 Of Arod, the family of the Arodites: of Areli, the family of the Arelites. 18 These [are] the families of the children of Gad, according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred.

19 The sons of Judah [were] Er and Onan: and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. 20 And the sons of Judah after their families were; of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites: of Pharez, the family of the Pharzites: of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites: 21 And the sons of Pharez were; of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites. 22 These [are] the families of Judah according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred.

23 [Of] the sons of Issachar after their families: [of] Tola, the family of the Tolaites: of Pua, the family of the Punites: 24 Of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites: of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites. 25 These [are] the families of Issachar according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred.

26 [Of] the sons of Zebulun after their families: of Sered, the family of the Sardites: of Elon, the family of the Elonites: of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. 27 These [are] the families of the Zebulunites according to those that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred.

28 The sons of Joseph after their families [were] Manasseh and Ephraim. 29 Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead [come] the family of the Gileadites. 30 These [are] the sons of Gilead: [of] Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites: of Helek the family of the Helekites: 31 And [of] Asriel, the family of the Asrielites: and [of] Shechem, the family of the Shechemites: 32 And [of] Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites: and [of] Hepher, the family of the Hepherites. 33 And Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad [were] Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 34 These [are] the families of Manasseh,

and those that were numbered of them were fifty and two thousand and seven hundred.

35 These [are] the sons of Ephraim, after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites: of Bechar, the family of the Bachrites: of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites. 36 And these [are] the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites. 37 These [are] the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those that were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These [are] the sons of Joseph after their families.

38 The sons of Benjamin after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites: of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites: of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites: 39 Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites: of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. 40 And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: [of Ard,] the family of the Ardites: [and] of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. 41 These [are] the sons of Benjamin after their families: and they that were numbered of them [were] forty and five thousand and six hundred.

42 These [are] the sons of Dan after their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These [are] the families of Dan after their families. 43 All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbered of them, [were] threescore and four thousand and four hundred.

44 [Of] the children of Asher after their families: of Jimna, the family of the Jemnites: of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites: of Beriah, the family of the Beriites. 45 Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites: of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. 46 And the name of the daughter of Asher [was] Sarah. 47 These [are] the families of the sons of Asher according to those that were numbered of them; [who were] fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

48 [Of] the sons of Naphtali after their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites: of Guni, the family of the Gunites: 49 Of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites: of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. 50 These [are] the families of Naphtali according to their families: and they that were numbered of them, [were] forty and five thousand and four hundred.

51 These [were] the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty.

52 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 53 Unto these

the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. 54 To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him. 55 Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. 56 According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.

57 And these [are] they that were numbered of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites: of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites: of Merari, the family of the Merarites. 58 These [are] the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korathites. 59 And Kohath begat Amram. And the name of Amram's wife [was] Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom [her mother] bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam their sister. 60 And unto Aaron was born Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 61 And Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before the LORD. 62 And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

63 These [are] they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan [near] Jericho. 64 But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. 65 For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness And there was not left a man of them save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The petition of Zelophehad's daughters, and their success; Moses having notice given him of his death, prays for a successor; and Joshua is appointed.

1 THEN came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these [are] the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah; *these, perceiving that the males only were numbered, and that the land was to be divided to them only, put in their claim for a share in their father's inheritance;* 2 And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, [by] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *which was God's court of judicature,* saying, 3 Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons, *that is, he died a natural death, to which he was liable for sin, as all other men are; he had done nothing to cut off the entail, and expose his children to forfeit their rights.* 4 Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, *be quite extinguished in the division of the land,* because he hath no son? Give unto us [therefore] a possession among the brethren of our father*. 5 And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.

6 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 7 The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them†. 8 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. 9 And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. 10 And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren. 11 And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall

* This was very commendable in these young women; it showed great faith in God's promise to bring them to Canaan, and great respect to their father, in desiring to have his name continued.

† This was done, Joshua xvii. 4., yet with a caution respecting their marriage, chap. xxxvi. 6.

give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses, *according to which, judgment shall be given in all like cases for the future* *.

12 And the LORD said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim †, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. 13 And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered ‡. 14 For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that [is] the water of Meribah in Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin §.

15 And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying, 16 Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, *who hath created the souls of all, and therefore is most able to judge whose spirit is best qualified for this office, and who can bestow a spirit answerable to so great a charge*, set a man over the congregation. 17 Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in, *guide and govern them both at home and abroad, in war and peace, and undertake the charge of them upon all occasions;* that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd, *in an helpless and miserable condition.*

18 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom [is] the spirit *of wisdom, government, zeal, and devotion*, and lay thine hand upon him, *confer authority, and entreat a blessing on him; and fear not but I will bestow upon him a great increase of gifts, answerable to the dignity and duty of his office:* 19 And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation, *that they may be witnesses of this transaction, and acknowledge him as their governor; and that his own heart may be the more impressed with this solemnity;* and give him a charge in their sight, *command him to undertake the work; encou-*

* The laws of our country respecting inheritances, are exactly agreeable to this law or statute of Israel.

† This was a range of mountains, of considerable extent, near the rivers Jordan and Arnon. Nebo was one particular mountain, and Pisgah the highest top of it.

‡ In Deuteronomy we find that Moses had desired to go over, but God forbade it, and says, *Thou shalt die as Aaron*, probably to recommend to him Aaron's submission and cheerfulness.

§ God by this means reminds him of his fault, and of the reason why he must die here. Yet much mercy was mingled; he gave him a sight of the promised land, and the hope of things infinitely better. Upon which Moses submits; yet earnestly prays that God would take care of Israel.

rage and animate him to perform it; direct him to be faithful and diligent, (see the charge in Deut. xxxi. vii.). 20 And thou shalt put [some] of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient, *show him respect as thy partner and successor, and cause others to do so, and impart to him the ensigns of thy authority.* 21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask [counsel] for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word, *that is, the word of God made known by Urim,* shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, [both] he, *Joshua himself,* and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation *.

22 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: 23 And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses †.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE learn hence, that to believe God's promises of the heavenly inheritance, and to seek a share in it, is highly commendable. These young women, daughters of Zelophehad, are commended by God for believing and claiming a share in the earthly Canaan, and for being unwilling to lose their part in it. Surely then it is fit that all should seek a better country, and be afraid of losing their inheritance there. Those *speak right* that pray to possess that; and nothing is so becoming women who profess godliness. If, as some commentators suppose, they had in their request a reference to heaven, of which Canaan was a type, they were five wise daughters indeed, and set a commendable example to those of their own age and sex, to *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,* which is promised in the covenant of grace to all that sincerely seek it.

2. Let us learn of Moses, this man of God, to express an affectionate concern for the welfare of God's Israel, his church; and

* In this respect Joshua was much inferior to Moses; for Moses never consulted God this way. He had no priest, no Urim; but went immediately to God. In this respect *there was no prophet like unto Moses.* As to the way in which the answers were given by Urim, (see note on Exodus xxviii. 30.), probably it was by some voice from the mercy-seat that the divine orders were given; but some of the Jewish rabbies wisely say, 'he is on the safest side, who owns his ignorance in this point.'

† This showed great integrity and humility in Moses; it was not his own son, nor one of his tribe, that he exalted. He discovered the highest regard to God's appointment, and not to the advancement of his own family.

especially when it wants able and faithful pastors. Moses had been ill treated by Israel; their rebellion provoked him to speak so unadvisedly that he lost Canaan; yet he tenderly loved them, and sought their welfare. He was concerned not to leave them *as sheep without a shepherd.* Let us cultivate a tender concern for the church of God. It is very bad with it, when God's people are as sheep exposed to want and danger, without a guide and guard. It engaged the pity of the Redeemer when he saw the multitude in such a state, and it should excite ours: or even when they have shepherds, if, as is too often the case, they are little better than none. God by his Spirit can qualify men for the work and service of his sanctuary, bring them to it, and make them successful in it. Let us view the vacancies inhis churches with a compassionate eye, and earnestly pray *the great Lord of the harvest, to send forth faithful labourers into it.*

3. When persons undertake public services for the church, it is decent, proper, and useful, that they should be solemnly set apart for, and charged to be faithful in, them; so Joshua was, who had great services before him for Israel. It would be proper in itself, if there was no express example of it in the New Testament; but we have many such, where christian ministers were recommended to the grace of God, by laying on of the hands of the apostles and elders of the church. The custom of doing it to this day, and giving a solemn charge, is very proper, as it tends to make good impressions on the minds of ministers and people. It is desirable that such a custom should be maintained in the church; and it should be our hearty wish and prayer, that it may be as seriously observed, and be as useful, as it is proper and decent.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The observance of the Lord's offerings commanded; and of the continual burnt offering.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, [and] my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, [for] a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season.

3 And thou shalt say unto them, This [is] the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the LORD; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, [for] a continual burnt offering. 4 The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even; 5 And a tenth [part] of an ephah of flour for a meat offering, mingled with the fourth [part] of an hin of beaten oil. 6 [It is] a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. 7 And the drink offering thereof [shall be] the fourth [part] of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy [place] shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the LORD [for] a drink offering. 8 And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: as the meat offering of the morning, and as the drink offering thereof, thou shalt offer [it,] a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

9 And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour [for] a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: 10 [This is] the burnt offering of every sabbath, besides the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

11 And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot; 12 And three tenth deals of flour [for] a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth deals of flour [for] a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one ram; 13 And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil [for] a meat offering unto one lamb; [for] a burnt offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. 14 And their drink offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third [part] of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth [part] of an hin unto a lamb: this [is] the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year. 15 And one kid of the goats for a sin offering unto the LORD shall be offered, besides the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

16 And in the fourteenth day of the first month [is] the passover of the LORD. 17 And in the fifteenth day of this month [is] the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. 18 In the first day [shall be] an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work [therein:] 19 But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire [for] a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year:

they shall be unto you without blemish: 20 And their meat offering [shall be of] flour mingled with oil: three tenth deals shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram; 21 A several tenth deal shalt thou offer for every lamb, throughout the seven lambs: 22 And one goat [for] a sin offering, to make an atonement for you. 23 Ye shall offer these besides the burnt offering in the morning, which [is] for a continual burnt offering. 24 After this manner ye shall offer daily, throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: it shall be offered besides the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering; 25 And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.

26 Also in the day of the first fruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the LORD, after your weeks [be out,] ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: 27 But ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD, two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year: 28 And their meat offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto one bullock, two tenth deals unto one ram. 29 A several tenth deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs; 30 [And] one kid of the goats to make an atonement for you. 31 Ye shall offer [them] beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering (they shall be unto you without blemish) and their drink offerings.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The offering at the feast of trumpets; on the day of humiliation; and on the eight days of the feast of tabernacles.

1 AND in the seventh month, on the first [day] of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you. 2 And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD; one young bullock, one ram, [and] seven lambs of the first year without blemish: 3 And their meat offering [shall be of] flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals for a bullock, [and] two tenth deals for a ram, 4 And one tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven

lambs: 5 And one kid of the goats [for] a sin offering, to make an atonement for you: 6 Besides the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

7 And ye shall have on the tenth [day] of this seventh month an holy convocation: and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work [therein:] 8 But ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD [for] a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, [and] seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish: 9 And their meat offering [shall be of] flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, [and] two tenth deals to one ram, 10 A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: 11 One kid of the goats [for] a sin offering; besides the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings.

12 And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: 13 And ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: thirteen young bullocks, two rams, [and] fourteen lambs of the first year; they shall be without blemish: 14 And their meat offering [shall be of] flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth deals to each ram of the two rams, 15 And a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs: 16 And one kid of the goats [for] a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering. 17 And on the second day [ye shall offer] twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot: 18 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, [shall be] according to their number, after the manner: 19 And one kid of the goats [for] a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering thereof, and their drink offerings, 20 And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish; 21 And their meat offering, and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, [shall be] according to their number, after the manner: 22 And one goat [for] a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering. 23 And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, [and] fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 24 Their meat

offering, and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, [shall be] according to their number, after the manner: 25 And one kid of the goats [for] a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering. 26 And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, [and] fourteen lambs of the first year without spot: 27 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, [shall be] according to their number, after the manner: 28 And one goat [for] a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering. 29 And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, [and] fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 30 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, [shall be] according to their number, after the manner: 31 And one goat [for] a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering. 32 And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, [and] fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 33 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, [shall be] according to their number, after the manner: 34 And one goat [for] a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

35 On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work [therein:] 36 But ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish: 37 Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, [shall be] according to their number, after the manner: 38 And one goat [for] a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

39 These [things] ye shall do unto the LORD in your set feasts, besides your vows, and your free will offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your meat offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings. 40 And Moses told the children of Israel, according to all that the LORD commanded Moses.

CHAPTER XXX.

Of Vows.

1 AND Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This [is] the thing which the LORD hath commanded. 2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

3 If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind [herself] by a bond, [being] in her father's house in her youth: 4 And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. 5 But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand; and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her.

6 And if she had at all an husband when she vowed, or uttered aught out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; 7 And her husband heard [it,] and held his peace at her in the day that he heard [it:] then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. 8 But if her husband disallow her on the day that he heard [it;] then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the LORD shall forgive her. 9 But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls shall stand against her.

10 And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath; 11 And her husband heard [it,] and held his peace at her, [and] disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. 12 But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard [them; then] whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the LORD shall forgive her. 13 Every vow, and every binding oath to

afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void. 14 But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which [are] upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard [them.] 15 But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard [them;] then he shall bear her iniquity. 16 These [are] the statutes, which the LORD commanded Moses between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, [being yet] in her youth in her father's house.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Midianites are spoiled; Balaam slain; and Moses is angry with the officers for saving the women alive.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people*. 3 And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, *to see who would be most ready to execute the divine commission,* and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian. 4 Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war. 5 So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of [every] tribe, twelve thousand armed for war, *who offered themselves freely.* 6 And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of [every] tribe, *so many from each, to prevent any jealousy, and not any more, to exercise their faith in God, who can save by few as well as by many; he sent* them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, and, *or even,* the trumpets to blow in his hand.

7 And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males, *which they came up with; but many escaped, and vexed Israel in the days of Gideon.* 8 And they slew the kings of Midian, besides the rest of them that were slain; [namely,] Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur,

* As the Midianites had drawn them into sin, and by that showed themselves to be their worst enemies, they are commanded to be destroyed while Moses lived, that he might see justice done to this enemy, and that farther occasion of sin to Israel might be removed.

and Reba, five kings of Midian, *all tributary to Sihon king of the Amorites, as we find in* Joshua xiii. 21. Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword, *who either staid among the Midianites, or, hearing of the destruction of the Israelites by the plague, came back to see, and promote their ruin, and died among the Midianites, but not, as he had formerly wished, the death of the righteous.* 9 And the children of Israel took [all] the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. 10 And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire*. 11 And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, [both] of men and of beasts. 12 And they brought the captives, *the women and children,* and the prey, *that is, their cattle and flocks,* and the spoil, *their gold and silver,* unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which [are] by Jordan [near] Jericho.

13 And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation went forth to meet them without the camp, *to congratulate their victory, and to put them in mind of cleansing themselves.* 14 And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, [with] the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle. 15 And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? 16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD†. 17 Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. 18 But all the women-children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves, *to be your servants, or even wives, if they learn the knowledge of God, and become proselytes; which might be the case, as they were so young.* 19 And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify [both] yourselves and your captives, on the third day, and on the seventh day‡. 20 And purify all [your] raiment, and all that is made of skins, and all work of

* The Chaldee says, their temples, strong places, where they had gods of gold and silver.

† Probably most of these very persons had been guilty, and if they had been spared, might have been accessary to the sin and ruin of Israel.

‡ Though the war was just and lawful, they contracted ceremonial pollution by shedding blood, and touching the dead; and purification was a practice common among heathen nations, on their return from war.

goats' [hair,] and all things made of wood, *of the spoils which you have taken.* (*See ch.* xix. 14. 16. 22.)

21 And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This [is] the ordinance of the law which the LORD commanded Moses; 22 Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead, 23 Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make [it] go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water, *that is, what would bear the fire, was to pass through it, and other things through the water. This also was common among the heathen.* 24 And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp.

25 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 26 Take the sum of the prey that was taken [both] of man and of beast, thou and Eleazar the priest and the chief fathers of the congregation: 27 And divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation*. 28 And levy a tribute unto the LORD of the men of war, which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, [both] of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep. 29 Take [it] of their half, and give [it] unto Eleazar the priest, [for] an heave offering of the LORD. 30 And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD, *that God might have his share, that is, a part out of fifty, from the congregation's share, for the Levites, and one out of five hundred of the soldiers', for the priests.* 31 And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses. 32 And the booty [being] the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep, 33 And threescore and twelve thousand beeves, 34 And threescore and one thousand asses, 35 And thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him. 36 And the half [which was] the portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thousand and seven and

* The congregation were to have a share, because the warriors went out in their name, and to make some reparation for what they had suffered by the Midianites. This was done by particular directions, and so all contests were prevented.

thirty thousand and five hundred sheep; 37 And the LORD's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and three score and fifteen. 38 And the beeves [were] thirty and six thousand, of which the LORD's tribute [was] threescore and twelve. 39 And the asses [were] thirty thousand and five hundred, of which the LORD's tribute [was] threescore and one. 40 And the persons [were] sixteen thousand, of which the LORD's tribute [was] thirty and two persons. 41 And Moses gave the tribute [which was] the LORD's heave offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses. 42 And of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred, 43 (Now the half [that pertained unto] the congregation, was three hundred thousand and thirty thousand [and] seven thousand and five hundred sheep, 44 And thirty and six thousand beeves, 45 And thirty thousand asses and five hundred, 46 And sixteen thousand persons) 47 Even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, [both] of man and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites, which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.

48 And the officers which [were] over thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses: 49 And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which [are] under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us*. 50 We have therefore brought an oblation for the LORD, what every man hath gotten, *or found*, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, ear-rings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the LORD, *for any instance of misconduct, especially in sparing the women, &c.* 51 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, [even] all wrought jewels. 52 And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the LORD, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels, *more than thirty thousand pounds.* 53 ([For] the men of war had taken spoil every man for himself) *besides the cattle above mentioned, which were brought to the common stock.* 54 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands, and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation, [for] a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, *of God's goodness to them, and their thankfulness to him.*

* The reason they gave here was very remarkable, *they had not lost one man.* This would be a great encouragement to them in their wars against the Canaanites.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We learn hence, that it is our duty to avoid all occasion of sin, and temptations to it. This is absolutely necessary, if we desire to maintain our integrity, and keep ourselves pure. These abandoned women were dangerous guests, and therefore these were but necessary and wise ordinances which appointed their execution. May we keep at the remotest distance from sin, and *abstain from every appearance of evil.* We have need to pray, *Lord, lead us not into temptation;* and if we sincerely desire this, we must keep a constant watch over ourselves, and resolutely avoid those places and that company, which may tend to stir up the corruptions of the heart. Let us therefore watch and pray. Moses was a faithful guardian of Israel, was afraid they should be led away and enticed by their own lusts, if they had such companions as the Midianitish women. The wisdom and duty of parents, and others who have the care of youth, is, to keep them from those who would be a snare to them, and lead them to sin.

2. It is fit, when God gives us success, that we should pay our thankful acknowledgments to him; not only *praise him with our lips,* which is very proper, *and speak well of his name,* but *honour him with our substance.* It is a maxim of the New Testament, and it would be well if it was regarded, that *every man should lay by in store, as God hath prospered him,* a fund for charitable uses; not to be alienated to any other purposes, but kept as a memorial of God's mercy, and in gratitude for his goodness. It is peculiarly proper in us, and pleasing to God, his ministers, and people, when these sacrifices are offered freely and generously, and without constraint, for *God loveth the cheerful giver;* and when we are *ready to distribute and willing to communicate, with such sacrifices he is well pleased.*

CHAPTER XXXII.

We have here the proposal of the Reubenites and Gadites to settle on this side Jordan; Moses is displeased at it; they obviate his objections, and he grants their request.

1 NOW the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, *which they had just taken from the Amorites, through which the river Arnon ran,* and the land of Gilead, *a fruitful mountain that had many cities upon it, Bashan in particular, and was a very rich and pleasant country,* that, behold, the place [was] a place for cattle; 2 The children of Gad, and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying, 3 Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon; 4 [Even] the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, [is] a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle. 5 Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, [and] bring us not over Jordan*.

6 And Moses said unto the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? 7 And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them? 8 Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. 9 For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them. 10 And the LORD's anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying, 11 Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: 12 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite,

* This seems to have been an irregular proposal, which arose from too great a love of themselves, from a want of regard to the authority of JEHOVAH, who had commanded the land to be divided by lot, and showed a distrust of the wisdom and power of God. Moses plainly thought it proceeded from a bad principle, covetousness, or the love of ease, or cowardice.

and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD. 13 And the LORD's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was consumed. 14 And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel. *Moses thought their proposal would discourage their brethren, and introduce confusion by other requests of a similar nature; he sets before them the conduct of their fathers, in distrusting God, and its dreadful punishment; and charges them with acting like their fathers, which would again bring down the anger of God upon Israel.* 15 For if ye turn away from after him, *as your fathers did,* he will yet again leave them in the wilderness, and ye shall destroy all this people, *occasion their destruction, by drawing them into sin.*

16 And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones, *repair those cities which are ruined, that our little ones and cattle may dwell safely.* 17 But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, *so many of us as are needful,* until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities, because of the inhabitants of the land*. 18 We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance: 19 For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward†.

20 And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war, *that is, before the ark, in your usual place,* 21 And will go all of you, *as many as are necessary for the expedition,* armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, 22 And the land be subdued before the LORD: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel, *that is, God will approve of it, and so will Israel;* and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. 23 But if ye will not do so, behold ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your

* Accordingly, forty thousand went with them; the whole number of fighting men was above an hundred thousand.

† It does not appear that this was their first intention, but upon consulting together they came to this resolution, to go over and fight with their brethren till they had conquered, and to have no share of their land, but be content with their own on this side Jordan.

sin will find you out, *the punishment of it will overtake you one way or other.* 24 Build ye cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth. 25 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth. 26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle shall be there in the cities of Gilead. 27 But thy servants will pass over every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord saith. 28 So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, *that they should have the land, if they performed the condition:* 29 And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle before the LORD, and the land shall be subdued before you; then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession: 30 But if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan. 31 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the LORD hath said unto thy servants, so will we do. 32 We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan [may be] ours.

33 And Moses gave unto them, [even] to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, *who, it seems, either by the appointment of Moses, or by their own request, were joined with them,* the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with the cities thereof, in the coasts, [even] the cities of the country round about.

34 And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer, 35 And Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah, 36 And Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran, fenced cities: and folds for sheep. 37 And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealch, and Kirjah-thaim, 38 And Nebo, and Baal-meon, (their names being changed) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded, *that is, they repaired the cities, and changed the names of some that were called after their idols.* 39 And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, *that is, some of the remoter descendants of Manasseh, for his sons must be dead long before,* went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which [was] in it. 40 And Moses gave *half of*

Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh ; and he dwelt therein. 41 And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havoth-Jair. 42 And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name. *Thus the matter was fully settled ; but the Reubenites suffered for it, being the first that were carried captive.* 1 Chron. v. 25.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We may observe, that the love of ease, and a fondness for the world, makes many fall short of the heavenly Canaan, the good land which God hath promised, the better country. When men have got some good things here, they are ready to sit down and forget the world for which they were intended. They do not care to suffer the mortifications and difficulties of a religious life. They are so well satisfied with this world, as not to desire a better; and take up their abode here, as if all their happiness consisted in worldly enjoyments. This is the ruin of thousands. *Love not the world,* then, for the gospel says, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him ; if any man will come to me, let him deny himself ;* and the language of God's providence is, *Arise and depart, for this is not your rest.* Let us attend to it, and direct our views to that world which God hath promised, and where alone we can be safe and happy.

2. The judgments of God upon transgressors should be a warning to us, that we do not fall into the same iniquity. Moses warns the people of what their fathers suffered for rebelling against God, and the same providence now warns us, for *these things were written for our instruction.* God is the same holy God, equally jealous of his honour, has the same power to inflict punishments, and his fierce anger will be augmented if we do not take warning. Let us look to ourselves that we provoke not God, for it will be to our destruction.

3. If men sin against the Lord, they may be sure that their sin, sooner or later, *will find them out :* however secret the commission, whatever plausible excuses or pretences they may make for it, God remembers it. He will *set their sins in order before them ;* they will feel the horrors of them in their consciences, and the wrath of God abiding on them. Providence may bring them to light, to their shame and confusion here ; but certainly they will

find them out at the great day; and, when weighed in God's righteous balance, they *will be found wanting*. Let us learn hence, to consider the evil of sin, and not think of it as a light matter: may we labour to find out our sins, and sincerely repent of them, that they may not rise against us another day.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The two and forty journeys of the Israelites; and the order for destroying the Canaanites.

1 THESE [are] the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. 2 And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys, by the commandment of the LORD: and these [are] their journeys according to their goings out. 3 And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month: on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. For the Egyptians buried all [their] first born, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments. 5 And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth. 6 And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which [is] in the edge of the wilderness. 7 And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pi-hahiroth, which [is] before Baal-zephon: and they pitched before Migdol. 8 And they departed from before Pi-hahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah. 9 And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim [were] twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees, and they pitched there. 10 And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea. 11 And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. 12 And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah. 13 And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. 14 And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink. 15 And they

departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai. 16 And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibroth-hattaavah. 17 And they departed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth. 18 And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah. 19 And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmon-parez. 20 And they departed from Rimmon-parez, and pitched in Libnah. 21 And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Rissah. 22 And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah. 23 And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher. 24 And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah. 25 And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth. 26 And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath. 27 And they departed from Tahath, and pitched at Tarah. 28 And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah. 29 And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah. 30 And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth. 31 And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaakan. 32 And they removed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped at Hor-hagidgad. 33 And they went from Hor-hagidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah. 34 And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah. 35 And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Ezion-gaber. 36 And they removed from Ezion-gaber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which [is] Kadesh. 37 And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom.

38 And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first [day] of the fifth month. 39 And Aaron [was] an hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor. 40 And king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel. 41 And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah. 42 And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon. 43 And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth. 44 And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ije-abarim, in the border of Moab. 45 And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibon-gad. 46 And they removed from Dibon-gad, and encamped in Almon-diblathaim. 47 And they removed from Almon-diblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of

Abarim before Nebo. 48 And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab by Jordan [near] Jericho. 49 And they pitched by Jordan, from Beth-jesimoth [even] unto Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab.

50 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan [near] Jericho, saying, 51 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; 52 Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: 53 And ye shall dispossess [the inhabitants of] the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it. 54 And ye shall divide the land by lot, for an inheritance among your families: [and] to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's [inheritance] shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit. 55 But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them [shall be] pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. 56 Moreover, it shall come to pass [that] I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The borders of the land, and the names of the men that shall divide it.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this [is] the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, [even] the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:) 3 Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward: 4 And your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin: and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh-barnea, and shall go on to Hazar-addar, and pass on to Azmon: 5 And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon

unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea. 6 And [as for] the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border. 7 And this shall be your north border; from the great sea, ye shall point out for you mount Hor. 8 From mount Hor ye shall point out [your border] unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad: 9 And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazar-enan: this shall be your north border. 10 And ye shall point out your east border from Hazar-enan to Shepham: 11 And the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward: 12 And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea: this shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about.

13 And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This [is] the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe: 14 For the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad, according to the house of their fathers, have received [their inheritance,] and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance: 15 The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan [near] Jericho eastward, toward the sun rising.

16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17 These [are] the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun. 18 And ye shall take one prince of every tribe, to divide the land by inheritance. 19 And the names of the men [are] these: of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 20 And of the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud. 21 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon. 22 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli. 23 The prince of the children of Joseph, for the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod. 24 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan. 25 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach. 26 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan. 27 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Asher, Ahihud the son of Shelomi. 28 And the prince of the tribe of the children of

Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud. 29 These [are they] whom the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Eight and forty cities are given to the Levites, six of which are to be cities of refuge; and the laws of murder and manslaughter.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan [near] Jericho, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in *: and ye shall give [also] unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them. 3 And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts. 4 And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, [shall reach] from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about. 5 And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city [shall be] in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities †. 6 And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites [there shall be] six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. 7 [So] all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites [shall be] forty and eight cities: them [shall ye give] with their suburbs. 8 And the cities which ye shall give [shall be] of the possession of the children of Israel: from [them that have] many, ye shall give many; but from [them that have] few, ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities

* Their maintenance had before been settled by tithes and offerings, here provision is made for their abode. In the wilderness they pitched their tents about the tabernacle, but now they were to be dispersed.

† There are different interpretations of this law. The most probable is, that they were to measure from the wall of the city a thousand cubits every way, which were the suburbs, properly so called; and, from the extremity of this, two thousand cubits more, which was for pasture for their cattle; and these suburbs are called, in Lev. xxv. 34, *the field of their suburbs.*

unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth, *in proportion to the number of cities belonging to that tribe. It is to be remembered, that the priests were included among them, and that neither they nor the Levites had any possession of lands beyond the three thousand cubits, which were little enough for their cattle, horses, &c.; all the rest belonged to the tribe in whose lot the Levites' city lay.* 9 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; 11 Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares, *without malice or design. The tabernacle also was a sanctuary, except in cases of wilful murder, and then they were to be taken even from the altar.* 12 And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment *. 13 And of these cities which ye shall give, six cities shall ye have for refuge.

14 Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, [which] shall be cities of refuge. 15 These six cities shall be a refuge, [both] for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares, may flee thither.

16 And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, *if he strike him in a violent and passionate manner, with any instrument that would probably prove fatal,* so that he die, he [is] a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. 17 And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he [is] a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. 18 Or [if] he smite him with an hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he [is] a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death †. 19 The revenger of blood himself shall slay

* The avenger was the next kinsman, who had a right to demand satisfaction; and, being greatly enraged, he might unjustly kill the manslayer; it was therefore a merciful appointment, both to the one and the other. It was ordered in Deuteronomy, that the road should be prepared, and finger-posts put up, that he might make the best of his way thither. He was then to appear before the judges, or elders appointed in every city for the decision of criminal causes, who were to examine the matter publicly, whether the murder was wilful or casual. This was to be done first in the city of refuge; and if that trial did not satisfy the avenger, then it was to be tried again in the city where the fact was committed, or the next to it, as appears by ver. 25, and Joshua xx. 6.

† This was a very wise law, designed to prevent persons from passionately striking with such dangerous weapons.

the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him *. 20 But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die; 21 Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote [him] shall surely be put to death; [for] he [is] a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him. 22 But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait, 23 Or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing [him] not, and cast [it] upon him, that he die, and [was] not his enemy, neither sought his harm: 24 Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments: 25 And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil; *he shall live there as a banished man, to show God's displeasure against the shedding of blood, though it was done unawares; but at the high priest's death, or rather at the accession of a new one, he shall be set at liberty; as prisoners are often released at the accession of a new prince.* 26 But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: 27 And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood, *that is, not liable to punishment:* 28 Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest, the slayer shall return into the land of his possession. 29 So these [things] shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

30 Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of *two* witnesses *at least:* but one witness shall not testify against any person [to cause him] to die.

31 Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which [is] guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death. 32 And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. 33 So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye [are:] for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but

* If the case was plain, he might do so, but if dubious, it was to be determined by the judges.

by the blood of him that shed it; *all murderers must be punished for the good of their country.* 34 Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel *in a very extraordinary manner, and every thing of this kind is highly displeasing to me.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE see, what was delivered as a curse, turned into a blessing; *I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel,* Gen. xlix. 7. The dispersion of the priests and Levites among the several tribes, was a very wise and gracious appointment. They had their provision by tithes, that they might have time to study the law, and teach the people; and by such an appointment the people had access to them, and might *ask the law at their mouths.* It was a great advantage to the Levites to live near together, that they might consult in difficult cases, and help each other. We have reason to be thankful for the appointment of Christian ministers, that they are spread through the country; and as the Lord has appointed that *they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel,* so he who *is taught in the word,* should cheerfully *communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.* The proportion is not determined now, as it was under the law, but is left to every man's liberality by the law of Christ; and the more cheerfully it is given, the more acceptable it is to him and his ministers.

2. We may observe, how very tender God is of the lives of his people. This appointment was designed to make men cautious of each other's lives, to prevent any artful attempts to murder persons by pretended accidents, and by that means to have the land polluted with blood, as well as men's consciences defiled, by those who wickedly should do it: and such are, without repentance, debarred from eternal life. Upon the same principle we should be tender of the health, reputation, and comfort of each other, and cherish a brotherly love to all; for the gospel declares that *he that hateth his brother is a murderer, and that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

3. Let us be thankful for the provision that is made in the gospel for our security and happiness, notwithstanding our many sins. We are exposed to the condemning sentence of God's law; but there is a refuge provided, even the Lord Jesus Christ, and the everlasting covenant, which he hath published and sealed.

There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, abide in him, and not wander from him; for those, and only those, *will have strong consolation,* and infallible security, who, as the apostle expresses it, in allusion to this appointment, *fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them.*

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The inconvenience of the inheritance of daughters, is remedied by marrying in their own tribes.

1 AND the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, *who had the care and management of that half tribe committed to them, which had an inheritance in the land of Canaan:* 2 And they said, The LORD commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters, *to which we cheerfully consented.* 3 And if they be married to any of the sons of the [other] tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance; *that is, the inheritances of this, and other tribes, by like accident, might in time be changed and confounded, contrary to the order before set by the Lord.* 4 And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers; *even in the jubilee year, which was intended to prevent such confusion, there will be no return of such land, and this will occasion debates and contests among posterity.*

5 And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well*. This [is] the thing which the LORD doth

* Moses consulted God upon this occasion, and, by his authority, said that their plea was just and reasonable.

command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best, *no force shall be put upon their inclinations;* only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry, *it must be one of the same tribe, and of their father's family in that tribe.* 7 So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. 8 And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers*. 9 Neither shall the inheritance remove from [one] tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.

10 Even as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad: 11 For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brothers' sons: 12 [And] they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father.

13 These [are] the commandments and the judgments, which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan [near] Jericho.

REFLECTION.

THE only observation we shall make on this chapter is, that though inheritances and alliances are not determined by the express appointment of God now, yet *wisdom is profitable to direct;* and it becomes us to have a due regard to the leadings of Providence in such important affairs as these. In *v.* 6, the LORD expressly commanded the daughters of Zelophehad to marry whom they thought best, only confining them to their father's tribe. This naturally suggests, how unreasonable it is for parents to put a force upon the inclinations of their children in such

* This law only extended to heiresses; for many of their great men and priests married wives of other tribes and countries: and other women, who had brethren to inherit, were free to marry into any other tribe, though it seems they generally confined themselves to their own. If their brethren died after they were married into another tribe, they could not inherit, but the estate went to the male heir. The design of this law was, to keep the tribes distinct, and hereby to fulfil the prophecies of old, particularly of the Messiah.

cases; on which the comfort and happiness of their lives depend. And though it is of the greatest importance that children should pay a due regard to the judgment and opinion of their parents, yet they are not obliged to comply with any proposals of this kind which they may make, if they are contrary to their own judgment and affections; for parents to use any methods of compulsion, is the highest degree of cruelty imaginable. This chapter suggests to us that *our eyes should ever be towards the Lord*, for his direction and blessing in all our settlements and resolutions. To encourage us herein, let us often meditate on that most delightful promise, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

DEUTERONOMY.

INTRODUCTION.

THE people that came out of Egypt being all dead, except CALEB and JOSHUA, MOSES, for the instruction of the new generation that were grown up in the wilderness, and were now ready to enter into Canaan, in this Book rehearses the chief things that had befallen them, both in a way of mercy, and of judgment, for forty years together; repeats the law again unto them, whence this book is called Deuteronomy, the second Law, or a repetition of the former, with some further illustrations. He confirms the whole with promises and threatenings; teaches them a prophetical song concerning what should befall them from that time to the latter end of the world, when they should become the people of God again, after their long rejection and desolation; he blesses the several tribes, and views the land of Canaan; his death; is buried by God; and JOSHUA made his successor.—All this Book was delivered at different times, in the last two months of Moses' life, and many things are repeated in it again, to impress the minds of the people. Those parts only of the history, which were not related in the former books, will be illustrated, and also some instructions given to Israel, which may be useful to us.

CHAPTER I.

Moses, at the end of the fortieth year, briefly rehearses the story of God's promise, and his anger for their incredulity and disobedience.

1 THESE [be] the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red [sea,] between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab. 2 ([There are] eleven days' [journey] from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea.) 3 And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first [day] of the month, [that] Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in command-

ment unto them; 4 After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei: 5 On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying,

6 The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: 7 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all [the places] nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea-side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. 8 Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them, and to their seed after them.

9 And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: 10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye [are] this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. 11 (The LORD God of your fathers, make you a thousand times so many more as ye [are,] and bless you, as he hath promised you!) 12 How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? 13 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. 14 And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken [is] good [for us] to do. 15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.

16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear [the causes] between your brethren, and judge righteously between [every] man and his brother, and the stranger [that is] with him. 17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; [but] ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment [is] God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring [it] unto me, and I will hear it. 18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.

19 And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea. 20 And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the LORD our God doth give unto us. 21 Behold, the LORD thy God hath

set the land before thee: go up [and] possess [it,] as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. 22 And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. 23 And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe: 24 And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out. 25 And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought [it] down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, [It is] a good land which the LORD our God doth give us.

26 Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God: 27 And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28 Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people [is] greater and taller than we; the cities [are] great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. 29 Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. 30 The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; 31 And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. 32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God, 33 Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents [in,] in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day.

34 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, 35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, 36 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. 37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, 38 Thou also shalt not go in thither. [But] Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. 39 Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between

good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it. 40 But [as for] you, turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea.

41 Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against the LORD, we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill. 42 And the LORD said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I [am] not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. 43 So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill. 44 And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, [even] unto Hormah. 45 And ye returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you. 46 So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode [there.]

CHAPTER II.

The story is continued; they were not to meddle with the Edomites, the Moabites, nor the Ammonites; but Sihon the Amorite, was to be subdued.

1 THEN we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the LORD spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days. 2 And the LORD spake unto me, saying, 3 Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward. 4 And command thou the people, saying, Ye [are] to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore: 5 Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau [for] a possession. 6 Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink. 7 For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the

LORD thy God [hath been] with thee; thou hast lacked nothing. 8 And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath, and from Ezion-gaber, we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab.

9 And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land [for] a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot [for] a possession. 10 The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; 11 Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites call them Emims. 12 The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetimes; but the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the LORD gave unto them. 13 Now rise up, [said I,] and get you over the brook Zered. And we went over the brook Zered. 14 And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, [was] thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD sware unto them. 15 For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed.

16 So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people, 17 That the LORD spake unto me, saying, 18 Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day: 19 And [when] thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon [any] possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot [for] a possession. 20 (That also was accounted a land of giants; giants dwelt therein in old time; and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims; 21 A people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; but the LORD destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead: 22 As he did to the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, when he destroyed the Horims from before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead even unto this day: 23 And the Avims which dwelt in Hazerim, [even] unto Azzah, the Caphtorims, which came forth out of Caphtor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.)

24 Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess [it,] and contend with him in battle. 25 This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations [that are] under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee. 26 And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, 27 Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the high way, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left. 28 Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink: only I will pass through on my feet; 29 (As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me;) until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the LORD our God giveth us. 30 But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as [appeareth] this day. 31 And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee: begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land. 32 Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz. 33 And the LORD our God delivered him before us; and we smote him and his sons, and all his people. 34 And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain: 35 Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took. 36 From Aroer, which [is] by the brink of the river of Arnon, and [from] the city that [is] by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: the LORD our God delivered all unto us: 37 Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, [nor] unto any place of the river Jabbok, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever the LORD our God forbad us.

CHAPTER III.

The story of the conquest of Og king of Bashan; Moses' prayer to enter into the land, and permission given him to see it.

1 THEN we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. 2 And the LORD said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. 3 So the LORD our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining. 4 And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5 All these cities [were] fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; besides unwalled towns a great many. 6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. 7 But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourselves.

8 And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that [was] on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto Mount Hermon; 9 ([Which] Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir;) 10 All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 11 For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead [was] a bedstead of iron; [is] it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits [was] the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.

12 And this land, [which] we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites. 13 And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, [being] the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants. 14 Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; and called them after his

own name, Bashan-havoth-jair, unto this day. 15 And I gave Gilead unto Machir. 16 And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon, half the valley, and the border even unto the river Jabbok, [which is] the border of the children of Ammon; 17 The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast [thereof,] from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, [even] the salt sea, under Ashdoth-pisgah eastward.

18 And I commanded you at that time, saying, The LORD your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all [that are] meet for the war. 19 But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle, ([for] I know that ye have much cattle,) shall abide in your cities which I have given you; 20 Until the LORD have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and [until] they also possess the land which the LORD your God hath given them beyond Jordan: and [then] shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you.

21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. 22 Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you.

23 And I besought the LORD at that time, saying, 24 O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God [is there] in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works and according to thy might? 25 I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that [is] beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. 26 But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. 27 Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold [it] with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. 28 But charge Joshua and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see. 29 So we abode in the valley over against Beth-peor.

CHAPTER IV.

Moses, having recited the history of God's favours to them in the wilderness, and their sins and punishments, proceeds in this chapter to exhort them to obedience.

1 NOW therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes, *the ordinances relating to divine worship,* and unto the judgments, *the laws relating to their private behaviour to one another,* which I teach you, for to do [them,] that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you, *and not perish, as they did, by their rebellions.* 2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, *by devising other doctrines or ways of worship than what I have taught or prescribed,* neither shall ye diminish [aught] from it, *by rejecting or neglecting any thing that I have commanded, though it seems never so small; he then adds a motive,* that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. 3 Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you. 4 But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God [are] alive every one of you this day, *not one of so many thousands have died since that time.* 5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. 6 Keep therefore and do [them;] for this [is] your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation [is] a wise and understanding people, *this will be most for your interest and reputation*.* For what nation [is there so] great, who [hath] God [so] nigh unto them, as the LORD our God [is] in all [things that] we call upon him [for?] *What nation hath had such signs and miracles, a God ready to hear prayer, to defend them from evil, and to bestow blessings? No people had more interest in heaven, such tokens of the divine presence, such righteous statutes, and regular worship.* 8 And what nation [is there so] great, that hath statutes and judgments [so] righteous as all this

* It was so in fact; Moses was applauded by the heathen nations; the Jewish laws were adopted by them; and their oracles pronounced the Jews to be the wisest of men, because they never changed their laws.

law, which I set before you this day. 9 Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; 10 [Specially] the day, *the great and memorable day*, that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and [that] they may teach their children. 11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. 12 And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only [ye heard] a voice. 13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, [even] ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone; *these he recommends to their peculiar regard.* 14 And the LORD commanded me at that time, to teach you statutes, and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it.

15 Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, *beware of idolatry, which you are in most danger of, from the corrupt inclinations you brought out of Egypt, and the evil customs of your neighbours,* for *remember* ye saw no manner of similitude on the day [that] the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; 16 Lest ye corrupt [yourselves,] and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17 The likeness of any beast that [is] on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, 18 The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that [is] in the waters beneath the earth: 19 And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, [even] all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven; *the heathens worshipped these, therefore the Israelites are so expressly cautioned against them.* 20 But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, *a common phrase to express great misery,* [even] out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as [ye are] this day, *and therefore it would be peculiarly ungrateful.* 21 Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, *with me, his minister and servant, whom he so highly favoured, because I*

did not keep close to his directions; and *he* sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance: 22 But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land; *he grants you the favour which he hath seen good to deny me, and this lays you under the strongest obligations.* 23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, [or] the likeness of any [thing,] which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee, *idolatry is the most direct breach of that covenant, and will be your ruin.* 24 For the LORD thy God [is] a consuming fire, [even] a jealous God, *he cannot endure it, but will terribly punish it.*

25 When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt [yourselves,] and make a graven image, [or] the likeness of any [thing,] and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: 26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong [your] days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. 27 And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. 28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell, *there your sin shall become your punishment, and ye shall be forced to worship idols, under severe penalties.* 29 But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find [him,] if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. 30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, [even] in the latter days, *in future generations,* if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; 31 (For the LORD thy God [is] a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them*.

32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and [ask] from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been [any such thing] as this great thing [is,] or hath been heard like it? *Search the annals of the world, the history of all*

* The Jews apply this promise to themselves in the midst of their present dispersion, and take encouragement from it.

former ages, and see, 33 Did [ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? *or not be overwhelmed and consumed by such a glorious appearance?* 34 Or hath God assayed to go [and] take him a nation from the midst of [another] nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? *The wonders he did before Pharaoh, the plagues of Egypt, and their final destruction in the Red sea.* 35 Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he [is] God; [there is] none else besides him; *this was the design of all, that ye might worship and obey Jehovah alone.* 36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he showed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. 37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; *kept his eye of compassion and care upon thee, as a father on his dear child; and he intends to do more still for thee,* 38 To drive out nations from before thee, greater and mightier than thou [art,] to bring thee in, to give thee their land [for] an inheritance, as [it is] this day. 39 Know therefore this day, and consider [it] in thine heart, that the LORD he [is] God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: [there is] none else. 40 Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong [thy] days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for ever, *if ye be obedient.*

41 Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan toward the sun-rising, *towards the east;* 42 That the slayer might flee thither, which should kill his neighbour unawares, and hated him not in times past; and that fleeing unto one of these cities he might live: 43 [Namely,] Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country, of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, of the Manassites.

44 And this, *which follows in the next chapter,* [is] the law which Moses set before the children of Israel: 45 These [are] the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt, 46 On this side Jordan, in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at

Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they were come forth out of Egypt: 47 And they possessed his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, which [were] on this side Jordan toward the sun-rising; 48 From Aroer, which [is] by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion*, which [is] Hermon, 49 And all the plain on this side Jordan eastward, even unto the sea of the plain, under the springs of Pisgah.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We are taught from this chapter, that religion is the truest wisdom, and what we should be engaged to, by all that God hath done for us and promised to us. All that he hath done for the church, in a way of judgment or mercy, was designed to promote obedience. These motives, which were addressed to the Jews, should come with greater force to us, as we have clearer displays of the self-existence, eternity, greatness, and glory of God; of his goodness to the whole creation, and to us in particular. We are distinguished by statutes and judgments superior to those of the Jews. Great things may be justly expected, therefore, from a people so remarkably favoured. *He hath not dealt so with other nations, praise ye the Lord.* The pure and sublime precepts of Christianity demand our most cordial regard. The law was given to Moses in circumstances of terror; but *grace and truth came by Christ,* in mildness and mercy. Let us cherish a grateful sense of our superior blessings, and with the voice of praise and thanksgiving, *call on the name of the Lord.* Let us *wash our hands in innocency, and so compass his altar,* and thus show we are faithful to his covenant. Remember that *he is* still *a consuming fire* to his enemies, but *rich in mercy to all that seek him* in sincerity. Thus shall it be well with us in this world, and we shall promote our eternal interests; for *godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* May we all cultivate a truly religious character, and remember, that *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and a good understanding have all they that keep his testimonies.*

2. If we would be religious, we should seriously consider these things, and *take diligent heed to ourselves.* Observe the cautions in the ninth, fifteenth, twenty-third, and thirty-ninth verses; it is necessary that we diligently attend to the law of God,

* Not Zion in Jerusalem, where David had his royal seat; this begins with another letter in the Hebrew, and is another place; the same as Hermon.

that we study it closely, and observe it exactly, without adding to it, or diminishing it. Let us *esteem all God's precepts, concerning all things to be right.* Watchfulness and diligence are necessary, because the *commandment is exceeding broad. The law is* also *spiritual;* let us, therefore, *walk circumspectly, and keep our souls with all diligence.* We have various temptations, inward corruptions, and many bad examples before us. These considerations, therefore, call for the greatest diligence, that our practice may correspond with our profession. Let us willingly engage in these duties; be thankful that we have *precept upon precept;* and daily pray, that God would *write his laws upon our hearts,* and enable us to *keep them even to the end.*

CHAPTER V.

This chapter is a repetition of what we find in Exodus xix. and xx.

1 AND Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. 2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, [even] us, who [are] all of us here alive this day. 4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, 5 (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to show you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying,

6 I [am] the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me. 8 Thou shalt not make thee [any] graven image, [or] any likeness [of any thing] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the earth beneath, or that [is] in the waters beneath the earth: 9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation] of them that hate me, 10 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. 11 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold [him] guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 12 Keep the sabbath-day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. 13 Six

days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 14 But the seventh day [is] the sabbath of the LORD thy God: [in it] thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that [is] within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. 15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and [that] the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.

16 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 17 Thou shalt not kill. 18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery. 19 Neither shalt thou steal. 20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour. 21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or any [thing] that [is] thy neighbour's.

22 These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.

23 And it came to pass when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire) that ye came near unto me, [even] all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; 24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath showed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. 25 Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. 26 For who [is there of] all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we [have,] and lived? 27 Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear [it,] and do [it.] 28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. 29 O that there were such an

heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! 30 Go say to them, Get you into your tents again. 31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do [them] in the land which I give them to possess it. 32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and [that it may be] well with you, and [that] ye may prolong [your] days in the land which ye shall possess.

CHAPTER VI.

Moses having repeated the ten commandments in the former chapter, here explains the first, and exhorts them to obedience.

1 NOW these [are] the commandments *of the moral law,* the statutes *of the ceremonial law,* and the judgments *of the judicial law,* which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do [them] in the land whither ye go to possess it: 2 That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes, and his commandments which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged, *that thou mayest procure length of days and all desirable prosperity.* 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do [it,] that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

4 Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God [is] one LORD; *one supreme, self-existent, underived Being, who alone is worthy of supreme adoration and worship. Their firm belief of this, would be their best guard against idolatry.* 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, *its foundation must be laid in the understanding, in believing in God, and knowing what he is;* and with all thy soul, *thy will and affections must be influenced by*

it; and with all thy might, *with the utmost ability of both; thus did Josiah,* 2 Kings xxiii. 25. 6 And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; *this is one method to promote the love of God, to treasure up in your hearts these important admonitions:* 7 And *another is,* thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, *rub it on their minds over and over again, as we whet a tool; the Hebrew signifies to whet, or sharpen; giving them line upon line, and precept upon precept; especially this great principle, the unity of God, and this first precept, to love him with all their hearts;* and *thou* shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates, *thou shalt take great pains to keep up the remembrance of God's power*.*

10 And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, 11 And houses full of all good [things,] which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; *Moses speaks of these things with great assurance, as what would certainly come to pass, and adds,* 12 [Then] beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, *let not prosperity make thee forget God, but remember Egypt, and the wonderful appearances of God in bringing you from thence. Then follow some general precepts of great importance:* 13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name *only when called to take a solemn oath, and not by idols, or any creature* †. 14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which [are] round about you; 15 (For the LORD thy God [is] a jealous God among you) lest the anger

* The Jews took this literally, and wrote texts of scripture on little scrolls of parchment, which they wore on their foreheads, on their wrists, on the skirts of their garments, and nailed them to their door-posts; for this our Lord reproves them, Matt. xxiii. 5.

† Our Lord quotes this text in reply to the tempter, Matt. iv. 10., with the addition of the word *only.* Without this word his reply seems not conclusive. It is probable, therefore, that word was originally in the text; for, without it, the text does not clearly condemn that regard to other deities, which some of them maintained in common with Jehovah, and which it was certainly the intention of Moses, in these words, to condemn.—ED.

of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth. 16 Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, *by doubting of his wisdom, power, or goodness,* as ye tempted [him] in Massah. 17 Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. 18 And thou shalt do [that which is] right and good in the sight of the LORD, *not following your own fancies, or superstitious inventions:* that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, 19 To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken, *to drive out all the Canaanites, otherwise they will tempt thee to idolatry.*

20 [And] when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What [mean] the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? 21 Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: 22 And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: 23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. 24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as [it is] at this day. 25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us, *we shall be owned and pronounced by God to be truly righteous and holy persons, if we sincerely obey him**.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are here taught, that the infinite and eternal Jehovah should have the chief place in our thoughts, affections, and regards. We, as christians, enjoy great advantages for the knowledge, fear, love, and worship of God. We believe his unity; that there is one only living and true God; and though *there are gods many, and lords many,* yet *to us there is but one God,* from

* The LXX render it, and the Hebrew may signify, *mercy shall be to us if we observe,* and God will continue his kindness and good-will unto us; and in keeping his commandments we shall find a great reward.

whom all other beings are derived, and upon whom all are dependant. Such are the first principles of religion. Moses and the prophets taught it, and Christ inculcated it. The first great command of the New Testament is, *to love the Lord thy God*, to entertain the highest esteem for him, the greatest delight in him, a readiness to do his will and to submit to his proposals. Yea, *the whole of man* is, *to fear God and keep his commandments*. It is our duty also to rely on his providence, not to tempt him by murmuring and fretfulness, *Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God*, ver. 16. Christ quotes this passage, when Satan tempted him to throw himself from the top of the temple, Matt. iv. 7. And as we should not distrust his care, while we are in the way of duty, so let us not presume upon enjoying his protection and blessing, while we neglect it. Let us labour to *do that which is right and good in his sight;* make his will and word (not our own inclinations and fancy) the rule of our lives and worship. May we consider him at all times; and especially watch over our hearts in times of prosperity, that we do not forget God.

2. Great care should be taken to make the law of God familiar to our minds. We have no occasion for phylacteries, nor to write it on our door-posts, for *the word is nigh unto us*. Since the invention of printing, bibles are in almost every hand. Let us, then, study them carefully, treasure up what they contain in our hearts, and meditate on the rules and directions therein given. He that sincerely loves God will love his word; *his delight will be in the law of the Lord, and in that law he will meditate day and night*.

3. It is a matter of the greatest consequence to the support of religion, that children be instructed in the law of God. They must be *trained up in the ways of God, brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;* be taught diligently the first principles of religion; that there is but one God and Father of all; that they are to love him as the author of their frame, and that *he is the giver of every good gift*. We should teach them the plain things of religion; not speculative and abstruse doctrines, and *matters of doubtful disputation*. And this should be done every day, *when walking by the way, when sitting in the house*, at our tables, and by our fire-sides; and take every occasion to speak of God and religion to our children and domestics. Let us especially be careful to do this when they inquire about these things; and encourage them to propose questions of this kind, by answering them readily and cheerfully. Should they inquire

the meaning or design of the statutes and ordinances of the gospel, why children are baptized? why we eat bread and drink wine in our religious assemblies? and of other religious services, let us be ready to answer them. And whether they ask or no, it is our duty to teach them; to show them the nature of religion, and how much it will be for their honour and interest, to fear and serve God, and keep his statutes; how pleasing it is to him, and how useful it will make them in the world. This is God's direction, and therefore we may cheerfully hope that our compliance with it will not be in vain; especially as he hath declared, that if we *train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it.*

CHAPTER VII.

The same subject (obedience to the first commandment) is continued, and all communion with the nations forbidden, for fear of idolatry.

1 WHEN the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; *here God promises to bring them into the land, and then directs them what to do;* 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, [and] utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, *except they forsake their idolatry, embrace the true religion, and submit and desire peace, as Joshua* vi. 25. ix. 15., nor show mercy unto them, *to spare them, or permit them to dwell with you in the land:* 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son, *nor with any other heathens, however rich or honourable their family: this was the ruin of the old world, and, if you fall into it, will be yours.* 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, *that were planted about their temples and altars,* and burn their graven images with fire; *all the*

relics of idolatry must be destroyed, and every thing removed that might keep up any remembrance of it.

6 For thou [art] an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that [are] upon the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye [were] the fewest of all people: 8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. *These are the reasons why they should do so, namely, their relation to God, his free grace in choosing them, and his faithfulness to his promises, though there was nothing in them to merit such favour. These arguments are enforced by a promise and a threatening.*

9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he [is] God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations; 10 And repayeth them that hate him *and break his commandments* to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face, *openly, so that he shall not be able to avoid it; but he will plainly see that it is a punishment from God, inflicted for his sin.* 11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.

12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers, *that is, the covenant of mercy; or, he will do more through his great mercy than he promised in his covenant;* 13 And he will *continue to* love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. 14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. 15 And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, *common diseases and infirmities*, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt*, which thou knowest, upon thee; but

* These were either sore boils, with which the Egyptians were visited, or some other diseases peculiar to them.

will lay them upon all [them] that hate thee. 16 And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them*: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that [will be] a snare unto thee. *They must execute their dreadful commission without reserve, since God would help them; and not to do it would lead them into sin and ruin. He then states the objections they might make, and answers them.*

17 If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations [are] more than I, how can I dispossess them? 18 Thou shalt not be afraid of them: [but] shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; 19 The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched-out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid; *remember all these things for thine encouragement.* 20 Moreover the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed; *an enemy which the Canaanites never expected, which should pursue them into their hiding places, and destroy them.* 21 Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God [is] among you, a mighty God and terrible, *though he makes use of the smallest creatures as his instruments.* 22 And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee, by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee, *lest wild beasts of the neighbouring deserts come and overspread that fruitful land for want of inhabitants.* 23 But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty

* This command hath been urged by the enemies of Christianity as an act of the greatest cruelty and injustice, but it is to be remembered, 1. That God, as their offended creator, had a right to their forfeited lives, and therefore might as well destroy them and their posterity by the sword of the Israelites, as by famine, pestilence, fire and brimstone rained from heaven, or any other calamity appearing to come more immediately from himself. 2. That the wickedness of this people, especially as aggravated by the destruction of Sodom, was such as made the execution done upon them an useful lesson to neighbouring nations. Comp. Gen. xv. 16. Lev. xviii. 20—28. Jude i. 4—7. Wisd. xii. 3—7. 3. That the miracles wrought in favour of the Israelites, not only at their coming out of Egypt, but their entrance on Canaan, proved that they were indeed commissioned as God's executioners, and consequently that their conduct was not to be a model for conquerors in ordinary cases. 4. That there was a peculiar propriety in destroying those sinners by the sword of Israel, as that would tend to impress the Israelites more strongly with an abhorrence of the idolatry and other vices of those nations, and consequently subserve the design of keeping them a distinct people, adhering to the worship of the true God, who was so gracious to mankind in general, as well as to them in particular.—See DODDRIDGE's Lect. p. 354.

destruction, until they be destroyed. 24 And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, *of which thirty-one are mentioned in the book of Joshua*, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them; *all these promises are conditional, if they did their part; if not, they would prove thorns in their side, plagues and temptations to them.*

25 The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold [that is] on them, nor take [it] unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it [is] an abomination to the LORD thy God. 26 Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, *any thing devoted to destruction*, Joshua vi. 17, 18., lest thou be a cursed thing like it, *as in the case of Achan:* [but] thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it [is] a cursed thing.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE may learn hence, that if we desire to keep ourselves pure, we must avoid all occasions of sin and the temptations to it. There are many commands to destroy altars and images, and they are often repeated. Human nature is prone to sin, is easily corrupted; therefore let us avoid every thing that would lead us astray, and have no friendship with *the unfruitful works of darkness.* We cannot be too solicitous about this, while we are in so much danger. May we, therefore, learn *to keep the heart with all diligence, and abstain from every appearance of evil.*

2. Let us *not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.* This is the exhortation of St. Paul, and the command in this chapter naturally suggests the same. They might have urged, that it would have been the way to bring them over; but God knew it would have the contrary influence; *for*, says he, ver. 4., *they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you.* It is a proper hint for us to choose those who worship and fear God, else they will not be comforts and help-mates for us. In unequal marriages we too often find the good are spoiled, rather than the bad mended. If in general it is wise for us to associate with them that fear God, and to depart from evil-doers, we should be especially careful, that we never form alliances with those who are strangers to true religion, for they may pervert us, or hinder

our making such progress in religion, as, with a suitable helpmate and the blessing of God, may be expected.

3. When those that profess religion forsake God and his ways, they may expect the greatest calamities. Those who, notwithstanding all their advantages, motives, and encouragements, *hate God, he will repay to their face.* Wicked men are those who hate God and his ways, his laws and people; but he will make examples of them; their punishment shall be conspicuous, and their plagues wonderful. Though God is long-suffering, if men abuse his forbearance, and go on in sin, his judgments will at length overtake them, and make them monuments of wrath. In order to prevent all these irregularities in ourselves, let us *cherish the love of God in our hearts,* that we may secure his friendship and blessing here, and be the objects of his favour and friendship for ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

Moses still goes on to urge the observation of the first command, from what God had done for them and promised to them.

1 ALL the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live *comfortably and happily,* and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers. 2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, *all thy afflictions, wants, and dangers, all thy comforts, blessings, and deliverances, and especially the punishments thou hast suffered, in order* to humble thee, [and] to prove thee, to know what [was] in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no. *To discover to themselves and others their inconstancy and rebellions, that they might know themselves better, and that posterity might take warning and be instructed by them.* 3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every [word] that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live; *that he might show you that God, by one word of his, can support life a thousand other ways than by common bread.* 4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither

did thy foot swell, these forty years, *thy garments served thee one generation after another; nor were thy feet injured, though passing through a hot and stony country.* 5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, *unwillingly and moderately, to show his love, and for the child's good,* [so] the LORD thy God chasteneth thee. 6 Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. 7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; *a country well watered with deep wells and springs.* 8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey, *where there is plenty of every thing, not only for the support, but also for the pleasure and delight of life.* 9 A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any [thing] in it; a land whose stones [are] iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass, *a country whose surface abounds with provisions, and whose bowels are stored with the most useful metals.*

10 When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee, *after every meal thou shalt thank God for his goodness, and for all the plentiful provisions he hath given thee;* 11 *but* Beware *that thy plenty do not become a snare, and* that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: 12 Lest [when] thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt [therein;] 13 And [when] thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; 14 Then thine heart be lifted up *with pride and self-confidence, as in* ver. 17., and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, [wherein were] fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where [there was] no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; 16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, *by keeping thee in a constant dependance upon himself, supported by an extraordinary providence every day,* and that he might prove thee, *whether thou wouldst be thankful and submit to his wise providence,* to do thee good at thy latter end, *that thou mightest enter on Canaan with greater pleasure, enjoy it more safely, and be in less danger of abusing it;* 17 And thou say in

thine heart, My power and the might of [mine] hand hath gotten me this wealth, 18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for [it is] he that giveth thee power to get wealth, *thou shalt continually remember that thou owest all to God, without whose favour thou couldst never have possessed the land, or prospered in it;* that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as [it is] this day.

19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish, *no might or power, of which you are so proud, shall deliver you.* 20 As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish, *if you fall into their sin you shall be destroyed in the same manner,* because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE dealings of God with us in the past part of our life, should be seriously and carefully recollected, as in *v.* 3., our supplies of food and raiment, our health, the afflictions through which we have passed, and the chastenings of God's word and providence. We should *call to remembrance the former days,* as motives to bless God, *who hath fed us all our lives, and redeemed us from evil. He hath been with us in six troubles and in seven.* Christians especially should do this; they should review their lives, and celebrate that *goodness and mercy which have followed them all their days.* This is peculiarly proper when we are just entering into the good land, the heavenly Canaan, which is infinitely better than all present possessions. Let us recollect this as a motive to serve and obey God, as *v.* 6. *Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways and to fear him.* As an encouragement to trust in him for future supplies, we may be assured that *his hand is not shortened,* we live by his word. Therefore, after the example of Christ, let us never distrust our Father's care, but keep close to duty, and *cast all our care on him.*

2. If we partake of the comforts of life, let us bless God, especially at our meals, as *v.* 10. *When thou hast eaten and art full, then shalt thou bless the Lord thy God for the good land that he hath given thee.* It is a reasonable duty, a debt of gratitude and justice to God. The pious Jews, if they ate but a morsel,

an olive, or other fruit, or drank a small draught of water, or even smelled a sweet flower, blessed God; and they thought themselves bound to it by their law; and also to teach their children to bless him for their meat, that they might be trained up in the commandment, as their rabbies express it. Let us practise this important duty, thankfully acknowledge God's goodness at our meals, in a serious, thoughtful manner, not in a few hasty, formal words, as if we were trifling with God, or ashamed of devout gratitude. It is a natural duty, and a proper expression of gratitude and dependance on him, as it is his blessing upon the creatures, which gives them a nourishing power. It is also the best way to prevent intemperance, and an abuse of his creatures; for, to begin and conclude every meal with serious prayer and thanksgiving, will prevent excess, and preserve our table from becoming a snare.

3. Let us be careful that in prosperity *our hearts be not lifted up*, and so lead us *to forget God*. It is a common saying, that 'riches beget pride,' and daily experience verifies it. We should be upon our guard to prevent it; remembering that it is God who giveth power to get wealth; that *all things come from him;* he giveth the good land in which we live, and every blessing we enjoy in it. Let us then labour to keep our hearts humble and contrite; and consider that those forget God who do not keep his commandments, judgments and statutes, as in *v.* 11. *Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes.* Let every good thing we have be consecrated to his service; and may all lead us to repentance and obedience. Then we shall enjoy it with peculiar pleasure; and when we come to *give an account of our stewardship,* and how we have *employed our talents,* we shall do it *with joy, and not with grief.*

CHAPTER IX.

Moses dissuades them from the opinion of their own righteousness, by rehearsing their several rebellions.

1 HEAR, O Israel: thou [art] to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven: 2 A people great and tall, the

children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and [of whom] thou hast heard [say,] Who can stand before the children of Anak! 3 Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God [is] he which goeth over before thee; [as] a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee. 4 Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. 5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6. Understand, therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou [art] a stiff-necked people.

7 Remember, [and] forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD. 8 Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you. 9 When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, [even] the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water: 10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them [was written] according to all the words which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. 11 And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, [that] the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, [even] the tables of the covenant. 12 And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt, have corrupted [themselves;] they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image. 13 Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it [is] a stiff-necked people. 14 Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they. 15 So I turned

and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant [were] in my two hands. 16 And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, [and] had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you. 17 And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes. 18 And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. 19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also. 20 And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time. 21 And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, [and] ground [it] very small, [even] until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.

22 And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hataavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath. 23 Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice. 24 Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you. 25 Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down [at the first;] because the LORD had said he would destroy you. 26 I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O Lord God, destroy not thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin: 28 Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. 29 Yet they [are] thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched-out arm.

CHAPTER X.

Moses relates the mercy of God in restoring the two tables, and exhorts to obedience.

1 AT that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood. 2 And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. 3 And I made an ark [of] shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand. 4 And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me. 5 And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.

6 And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead. 7 From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters.

8 At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day. 9 Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD [is] his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.

10 And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, [and] the LORD would not destroy thee. 11 And the LORD said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give unto them.

12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and

to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, 13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? 14 Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens [is] the LORD's thy God, the earth [also,] with all that therein [is.] 15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, [even] you above all people, as [it is] this day. 16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. 17 For the LORD your God [is] God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: 18 He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment. 19 Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. 20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. 21 He [is] thy praise, and he [is] thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen. 22 Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

CHAPTER XI.

An exhortation to obedience, from their personal experience of God's great works, and their future expectations in the land of promise; a blessing and a curse are set before them.

1 THEREFORE thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway. 2 And know ye this day: for [I speak] not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm. 3 And his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land; 4 And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he

made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and [how] the LORD hath destroyed them unto this day; 5 And what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place; 6 And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that [was] in their possession, in the midst of all Israel. 7 But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD which he did. 8 Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it; 9 And that ye may prolong [your] days in the land, which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

10 For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, [is] not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst [it] with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: 11 But the land, whither ye go to possess it [is] a land of hills and valleys, [and] drinketh water of the rain of heaven: 12 A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God [are] always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. 13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 That I will give [you] the rain of your land in due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. 15 And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. 16 Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; 17 And [then] the LORD's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and [lest] ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. 19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 20 And thou shalt write them upon the

door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: 21 That you days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments, which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; 23 Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. 24 Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea, shall your coast be. 25 There shall no man be able to stand before you: [for] the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; 27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: 28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. 29 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal. 30 [Are] they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh? 31 For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein. 32 And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.

CHAPTER XII.

Monuments of idolatry to be destroyed; the place of God's service to be kept; and blood forbid to be eat.

1 THESE [are] the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth. 2 Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: 3 And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.

4 Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God. 5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, [even] unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: 6 And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: 7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. 8 Ye shall not do after all [the things] that we do here this day, every man whatsoever [is] right in his own eyes; *not live in the neglect of sacrifices, and many other rites of the ceremonial law, which they took occasion to do, by reason of their unsettled condition;* 9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you. 10 But [when] ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and [when] he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; 11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the

LORD. 12 And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that [is] within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you. 13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: 14 But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

15 Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart. 16 Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.

17 Thou mayest not eat within thy gates thy tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds, or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy free-will offerings, or heave offering of thine hand: 18 But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that [is] within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.

19 Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon thy earth.

20 When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after. 21 If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there, be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after. 22 Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat them: the unclean and the clean shall eat [of] them alike. 23 Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood [is] the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. 24 Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water. 25 Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou shalt do [that which is] right in the sight of the LORD.

26 Only thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou

shalt take, and go unto the place which the LORD shall choose: 27 And thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God: and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh.

28 Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest [that which is] good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God.

29 When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; 30 Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. 31 Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD which he hateth have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. 32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

CHAPTER XIII.

Moses having in the former chapters warned the people against being led to idolatry by the neighbouring nations, in this directs them how to behave to idolaters among themselves.

1 IF there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, *one who pretends to have a revelation from God by a vision or dream*, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, *foretells some strange and wonderful things to come, with a design to lead you to idolatry*, 2 And *if God should permit* the sign or the wonder to come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. *God may suffer such a one to perform a miracle, as he did the Egyptian magicians; or to foretell future events, as he*

did Balaam; but all this is only to try your constancy, whether you love God and will adhere to him. If he would lead you from Jehovah, you may be sure he is no true prophet. 4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. 5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death *by the elders or counsellors, after due examination;* because he hath spoken to turn [you] away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in, *that is, because he hath endeavoured to persuade and force thee to idolatry.* So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee, *and prevent the mischief that might follow thereupon.*

6 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which [is] as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; 7 [Namely,] of the gods of the people which [are] round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the [one] end of the earth even unto the [other] end of the earth, *if he urge upon thee the universality of idolatry, and that all the nations round about thee, far and near, did so;* 8 Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, *but use all means to bring him to condign punishment:* 9 But thou shalt surely kill him, *inform against him to the magistrate, that he may be put to death, and* thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death; and afterwards the hand of all the people, *thou shalt throw the first stone, as the accuser and witnesses were commanded to do.* 10 And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 11 And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you, *when they see a man prosecuting a near relation, for only attempting such a thing, though it should be without success.*

12 If thou shalt hear [say] in one of thy cities, *the cities of Israel,* which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, 13 [Certain] men, the children of Belial, *unruly persons, who will not submit to God's yoke; wicked, licentious persons, who have forsaken Jehovah, to serve other gods,* are gone out from

among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; 14 Then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, [if it be] truth, [and] the thing certain, [that] such abomination is wrought among you, *that the whole city has revolted;* 15 Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that [is] therein, and the cattle thereof with the edge of the sword*. 16 And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God, *for his honour, and out of regard for the purity of his worship:* and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again, *it shall lie in ruins, as a monument of his justice, and as a warning to other cities.* 17 And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand, *thou shalt not take, for thy own use, any of the spoil of that city which is devoted to destruction;* that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and show thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers; 18 When thou shalt hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day, to do [that which is] right in the eyes of the LORD thy God†.

* The Jewish rabbies say, that if the greatest part of it had revolted, the innocent were to be removed, but the whole city was to be destroyed; if the lesser part only had offended, the guilty were to be taken out, with their goods, and destroyed.

† Some have objected to the law in this chapter as being an invincible bar to freedom of inquiry, and a foundation for persecution, and therefore unworthy of God. To this it is answered, 1. Though we readily allow that persecution is an evil in a state of nature, yet perhaps it may be asserted, that as the divine Being knows what degree of evidence will attend any doctrine of religion in any given circumstances of time, place, and person, which we cannot judge of, *he* may pass sentence upon idolaters, and other profane persons, where *human* laws cannot safely do it. 2. As God was the *temporal king* of Israel, and even their kings were only his *viceroys*, idolatry was in the nature of *high treason*, and therefore justly punishable as by their *statute* laws. 3. It is also to be remembered, that God gave the land of Canaan, with many temporal emoluments, to the Israelites, as a reward of their obedience to him; it was therefore equitable, that in case of disobedience to some of his most important laws, they should be subject to some peculiar temporal penalties, and even to death itself, if this act were committed during their abode in that land. 4. Nevertheless, it is to be observed, that the Israelites are never commissioned to make war upon their neighbours, or exercise any violence towards any of them, in order to *compel* them to worship the God of Israel; nor to force them to it even after they were conquered, (see chap. xx. 10.), nor are they empowered thus forcibly to attempt to recover any *native Israelite*, who should revolt to idolatry, and go to settle in a Gentile country. 5. As God had placed the Israelites under such an extraordinary equal providence, that the prosperity of the country should depend upon their adherence to the true God, in opposition to idols, his commanding them to put to death the beginner of a revolt, was a wise precaution; and such an one, as, in these circumstances, even human prudence might have suggested to subordinate

REFLECTION.

The only reflection we shall make upon the whole is this, that it becomes us to entertain the highest veneration for the blessed God; to keep his commandments, and serve him, and to cleave to him with all our hearts. Let us look upon those as our greatest enemies, that would lead us to break God's commands, or to withdraw our feet from his services; and learn to reject their proposals with disdain and resentment, though they should be our most intimate friends, or nearest relations. In a word, this chapter speaks to us all the language of Solomon, *Prov.* i. 10., *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*

CHAPTER XIV.

God's children are not to disfigure themselves in mourning; what may be eaten, and what not; and of tithing.

1 YE [are] the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. 2 For thou [art] an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that [are] upon the earth.

3 Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. 4 These [are] the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, 5 The hart, and the roebuck, and the fallow-deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois. 6 And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, [and] cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat. 7 Nevertheless, these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; [as] the camel, and the

governors, if such governors had been permitted to make capital laws. 6. When we consider how great a good it would have been to the *whole world*, that Israel should continue to maintain the knowledge and worship of the true God in opposition to all idolatry, it will further appear, that a constitution deterring them from idolatry would be merciful to *the world* in general as well as their nation, in proportion to the degree in which it was severe to any particular offenders.—See DODDRIDGE's *Lectures*, p. 356.

hare, and the coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; [therefore] they [are] unclean unto you.

8 And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it [is] unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase.

9 These ye shall eat of all that [are] in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat: 10 And whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat: it [is] unclean unto you.

11 [Of] all clean birds ye shall eat. 12 But these [are they] of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray: 13 And the glede, and the kite, and the vulture after his kind, 14 And every raven after his kind, 15 And the owl, and the night-hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind, 16 The little owl, and the great owl, and the swan, 17 And the pelican, and the gier eagle, and the cormorant, 18 And the stork, and the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat. 19 And every creeping thing that flieth [is] unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten. 20 [But of] all clean fowls ye may eat.

21 Ye shall not eat [of] any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that [is] in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou [art] an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. 23 And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.

24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; [or] if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: 25 Then shalt thou turn [it] into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: 26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household, 27 And the Levite that [is] within thy gates; thou

shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

28 At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay [it] up within thy gates: 29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which [are] within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

CHAPTER XV.

The seventh year to be a year of release for the poor; and it must be no hinderance to lending or giving.

1 AT the end of [every] seven years thou shalt make a release. 2 And this [is] the manner of the release: every creditor that lendeth [aught] unto his neighbour shall release [it;] he shall not exact [it] of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD's release. 3 Of a foreigner thou mayest exact [it again:] but [that] which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release; 4 Save when there shall be no poor among you: for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance to possess it: 5 Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. 6 For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.

7 If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: 8 But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, [in that] which he wanteth. 9 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him naught; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. 10 Thou shalt surely give

him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. 11 For the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

12 [And] if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. 13 And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: 14 Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock; and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: [of that] wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. 15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day.

16 And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; 17 Then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust [it] through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise. 18 It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant [to thee,] in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.

19 All the firstling males that come of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep. 20 Thou shalt eat [it] before the LORD thy God year by year in the place which the LORD shall choose, thou and thy household. 21 And if there be [any] blemish therein, [as if it be] lame, or blind, [or have] any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God. 22 Thou shalt eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean [person shall eat it] alike, as the roebuck, and as the hart, 23 Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water.

CHAPTER XVI.

The feast of the passover, of weeks, of tabernacles; of judges and justice; groves and images are forbidden.

1 OBSERVE the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. 2 Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there. 3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, [even] the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste; that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. 4 And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there [any thing] of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. 5 Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee: 6 But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. 7 And thou shalt roast and eat [it] in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents. 8 Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day [shall be] a solemn assembly to the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work [therein.]

9 Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from [such time as] thou beginnest [to put] the sickle to the corn. 10 And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give [unto the LORD thy God,] according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: 11 And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that [is] within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that [are] among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there. 12 And

thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

13 Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine: 14 And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that [are] within thy gates. 15 Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.

16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty: 17 Every man [shall give] as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.

18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. 19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. 20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

21 Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee. 22 Neither shalt thou set thee up [any] image; which the LORD thy God hateth.

CHAPTER XVII.

Things sacrificed must be sound; idolaters must be put to death; hard controversies to be determined by the priests and judges; and the election and duty of a king.

1 THOU shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God [any] bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, [or] any evil favouredness: for that [is] an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

2 If there be found among you within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, 3 And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; 4 And it be told thee, and thou hast heard [of it,] and inquired diligently, and, behold, [it be] true, [and] the thing certain, [that] such abomination is wrought in Israel: 5 Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, [even] that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. 6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death: [but] at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. 7 The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, [being] matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose; 9 And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment, *that sentence which is agreeable to the law:* 10 And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall show thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: 11 According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee, [to] the right hand nor [to] the left. 12 And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. 13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that [are] about me; 15 Thou shalt in any wise set [him] king over thee whom the LORD thy God shall choose: [one] from among thy

brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which [is] not thy brother. 16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. 17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. 18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of [that which is] before the priests the Levites: 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: 20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, [to] the right hand, or [to] the left: to the end that he may prolong [his] days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

CHAPTER XVIII.

We have in this chapter, some rules concerning the dues and revenues of the Levites; a caution against the superstitious customs of the heathen; the promise of a great and glorious prophet; presumptuous prophets to be put to death; and how they may be known.

1 THE priests the Levites, [and] all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel, *no part of the spoil taken in war, or inheritance in the land:* they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, *such sacrifices whereof part was burnt, and part given to them,* and his inheritance*. 2 Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD [is] their inheritance, as he hath said unto them. *He would supply them out of those things that were set apart in a solemn manner for his own use; nevertheless, that they might not want, further directions are given for their support.* 3 And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether [it be] ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder,

* *His inheritance,* that is, the tithes, the first fruits, the money paid for the redemption of the first-born, and other oblations, besides those that were made by fire.

and the two cheeks and the maw*. 4 The first fruit [also] of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep shalt thou give him†. 5 For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever, *and therefore he ought to be provided for.* 6 And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the LORD shall choose, *with singular devotion and special affection to the service of God, to spend the remainder of his life there,* Psalm xxvii. 4. 7 Then he shall minister in the name of the LORD his God, *be admitted to do the service of the house,* as all his brethren the Levites [do,] which stand there before the LORD, *as those whose course it was at that time to attend upon the service.* 8 They shall have like portions to eat *with those whose course it is to serve,* besides that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony; *though he have an estate of his own, yet he was to have his share of the tabernacle or temple provisions, for his service there, and his money should be kept to redeem his patrimony, if he afterwards saw occasion to do it. While he served in God's house, he was welcome there, and should not serve in vain.*

9 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. 10 There shall not be found among you [any one] that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *either to pass between two fires, or to be burned in the fire, in honour of their idol god;* [or] that useth divination, *any kind of curious or forbidden arts, with a view of foretelling secrets, and future events;* [or] an observer of times, *who by the motion of the clouds or heavenly bodies, pretended to calculate nativities, or foretell future events, like our modern astrologers;* or an enchanter, *who, like the ancient augurs, foretold future events by some circumstance in the bodies of animals that were sacrificed, or by meeting living animals, or the flight of birds,* &c.; or a witch, *who pretended to impose on the senses of men by changing the form and appearance of things;* 11 Or a charmer, *drawing serpents together by certain sounds, and so pretending to inspiration, and made people believe they had extraordinary power;* or a consulter with familiar spirits,

* Whether the maw signifies the same as the breast, or an additional part, is not certain. These shares were divided among the priests that were in waiting.

† These were to be brought to the priests who resided among them in the country, and no one must taste of his corn, wine, or oil, till the priests had received and offered the first fruits; the reason is added, ver. 5.

who pretended to be inspired by them, distorting themselves in a violent manner when they gave their oracles, and throwing their voices as if the sound came out of their belly; or a wizard, *it is uncertain what these were: the rabbies assert, that it refers to persons who made use of a certain plant, whose root was shaped like a beast;* or a necromancer, *those who pretend to bring up spirits from the dead, in order to consult them.* 12 For all that do these things [are] an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. 13 Thou shalt be perfect, *upright, or sincere,* with the LORD thy God, *and not mingle any of these superstitious rites with his worship.* 14 For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so [to do,] *hath taught thee better by his law, and will more fully inform thee by that Prophet he will raise up to thee.*

15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, *of thy own stock and nation,* like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, *when the whole congregation of Israel assembled together,* saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well [spoken that] which they have spoken, *God approved the request, and said,* 18 I will raise them up a Prophet, *that is, Christ,* from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him, *he shall speak like Moses, freely and plainly, and reveal God's will clearly and fully*.* 19 And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require [it] of him, *call him to account, and punish him for it†.*

20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, *as they that prophesied by Baal did,* or that shall speak in the name of

* So Christ did; and, like Moses, he was a mediator and a lawgiver; introduced a new dispensation; conversed with God as with a friend and father; did signs and wonders; foretold things to come; established a better covenant, on better promises, and *brought life and immortality to light by his gospel.*

† This threatening was remarkably fulfilled upon the Jews for rejecting Christ, when their temple and nation were destroyed, and *wrath came upon them to the uttermost.*

other gods, even that prophet shall die *by the hand of the magistrate.*

21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? *This was a very proper question to propose, and the answer is given.* 22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD *he must give a sign, or work a miracle immediately, to prove his mission, (for to this it seems to refer, and not to foretelling future events),* if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that [is] the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, [but] the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him *and his threatening, which he hath spoken, nor be afraid to put him to death. This was putting the matter on a very clear and plain issue.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE are taught, that those who have devoted themselves to the service of God's sanctuary, should have a comfortable maintenance: it is the appointment of God's law, and is reasonable and proper in itself. The reason given for their having so large a portion was, because *they had no inheritance in Israel.* Christian ministers, who separate themselves from the business of the world, and are deprived of those secular advantages they might gain from trade and commerce, deserve to be supported in a comfortable, creditable way. The gospel, though it does not allot its preachers any particular part or portion of men's substance, yet commands that *they who preach the gospel, should live by the gospel,* and that *they who communicate spiritual things, should partake of their carnal things,* to whom they communicate spiritual. This is the will of our great Lord and Master, and every faithful servant will carefully and cheerfully perform this branch of duty.

2. Let us be upon our guard against all those superstitious customs, which Israel is here warned against. One would wonder they should need so much caution, considering what God had said to them, and done for them; considering his laws, and his miracles. Yet, notwithstanding all these, we find them strangely addicted to the superstitions of the heathen. And there is too much of this spirit among christians; there are many who observe times and seasons, call some days lucky, others unlucky; consult fortune-tellers, to know what shall happen to them; and have recourse to spells or charms for the cure of diseases, and the dis-

covery of things lost. All this is superstitious folly; it originally proceeded from the devil, the father of lies, and is among those arts by which he supports his kingdom. The practice of these things shews a weak mind; it is an affront to God, and what we should carefully avoid, for the credit of our own understandings, as well as of religion. If ever we are tempted to have any thing to do with these *works of darkness*, let us consider, that *the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

3. Let us learn to pay the highest regard to the Lord Jesus Christ, the *great Prophet;* here is no superstitious whim or invention; *to the law and to the testimony;* this is the plain rule of our duty. Let us bless God who hath raised up this great *Prophet, mighty both in word and deed;* that *he has declared the whole counsel of God; all that the Father commanded he made known unto the world.* He introduced a new and glorious dispensation, a system of the most excellent laws, confirmed by various miracles, by the prophecy of events which have been accomplished, and especially by his own resurrection. *The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. He is God's beloved Son,* his authorized messenger, *let us,* therefore, *hear him.* It is at our peril if we reject him; for, *if he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who tramples on the blood of the Son of God? He that believeth on the Son hath life; but he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

CHAPTER XIX.

Of the cities of refuge, and the privileges thereof; the landmark not to be removed; two witnesses at least required to prove a criminal fact; and the punishment of a false witness.

1 WHEN the LORD thy God hath cut off the nations, whose land the LORD thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses; 2 Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it. 3 Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may

flee thither. 4 And this [is] the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past; 5 As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live: 6 Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he [was] not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past. 7 Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee. 8 And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; 9 If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his way; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, besides these three: 10 That innocent blood be not shed in thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance, and [so] blood be upon thee.

11 But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities: 12 Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence; and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood that he may die. 13 Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away [the guilt of] innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.

14 Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.

15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

16 If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him [that which is] wrong; 17 Then both the men, between whom the controversy [is,] shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges which shall be in those days; 18 And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, [if] the witness [be] a false witness, [and] hath testified falsely against his brother; 19 Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought

to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. 20 And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. 21 And thine eye shall not pity; [but] life [shall go] for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

CHAPTER XX.

The priest's exhortation to encourage the people to battle; how to treat the cities that accept or refuse the proclamation of peace; and what cities must be devoted to destruction.

1 WHEN thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, [and] a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God [is] with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 2 And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, 3 And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; 4 For the LORD your God [is] he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

5 And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man [is there] that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. 6 And what man [is he] that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not [yet] eaten of it? let him [also] go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. 7 And what man [is there] that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. 8 And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man [is there that is] fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart. 9 And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.

10 When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then

proclaim peace unto it. 11 And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, [that] all the people [that is] found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. 12 And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: 13 And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: 14 But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, [even] all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. 15 Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities [which are] very far off from thee, which [are] not of the cities of these nations.

16 But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee [for] an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: 17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them: [namely,] the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: 18 That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.

19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an ax against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field [is] man's [life]) to employ [them] in the siege: 20 Only the trees which thou knowest that they [be] not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.

CHAPTER XXI.

The expiation of a murder, when the slayer is unknown; the first-born is not to be disinherited upon private affection; a rebellious son must be stoned to death.

1 IF [one] be found slain in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, [and] it be not known who hath slain him: 2 Then thy elders and thy judges shall come

forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which [are] round about him that is slain: 3 And it shall be, [that] the city [which is] next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer, which hath not been wrought with, [and] which hath not drawn in the yoke; 4 And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley: 5 And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the LORD thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the LORD; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be [tried:] 6 And all the elders of that city, [that are] next unto the slain [man,] shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: 7 And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen [it.] 8 Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. 9 And the blood shall be forgiven them. So shalt thou put away the [guilt of] innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do [that which is] right in the sight of the LORD.

10 When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, 11 And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldst have her to thy wife; 12 Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; 13 And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. 14 And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.

15 If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, [both] the beloved and the hated; and [if] the first-born son be hers that was hated: 16 Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit [that] which he hath, [that] he may not make the son of the beloved first-born before the son of the hated, [which is indeed] the first born: 17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated [for] the first-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for

he [is] the beginning of his strength; the right of the first-born [is] his.

18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and [that] when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: 19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; 20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son [is] stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; [he is] a glutton, and a drunkard. 21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: 23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in anywise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged, [is] accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance.

CHAPTER XXII.

Of humanity toward brethren; the distinction of the sexes by apparel; of adultery, rapes, fornication, and incest.

1 THOU shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. 2 And if thy brother [be] not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. 3 In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost things of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself. 4 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift [them] up again.

5 The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so [are] abomination unto the LORD thy God.

6 If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, [whether they be] young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young: 7 [But] thou shalt in anywise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and [that] thou mayest prolong [thy] days.

8 When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.

9 Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled. 10 Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together. 11 Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, [as] of woollen and linen together.

12 Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest [thyself.]

13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: 15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth [the tokens of] the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: 16 And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; 17 And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech [against her,] saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these [are the tokens of] my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18 And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; 19 And they shall amerce him in an hundred [shekels] of silver, and give [them] unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. 20 But if this thing be true, [and the tokens of] virginity be not found for the damsel: 21 Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.

22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, [both] the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. 23 If a damsel [that is] a virgin be betrothed unto an

husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; 24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, [being] in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.

25 But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die: 26 But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; [there is] in the damsel no sin [worthy] of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so [is] this matter: 27 For he found her in the field, [and] the betrothed damsel cried, and [there was] none to save her.

28 If a man find a damsel [that is] a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; 29 Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty [shekels] of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.

30 A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Who may, or who may not, enter into the congregation; and uncleanness to be avoided in the camp.

1 HE that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD. 2 A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.

3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: 4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. 5 Nevertheless, the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing

unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee. 6 Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.

7 Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he [is] thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land. 8 The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.

9 When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.

10 If there be among you any man, that is not clean by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp: 11 But it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall wash [himself] with water: and when the sun is down he shall come into the camp [again.] 12 Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad: 13 And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee: 14 For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

15 Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: 16 He shall dwell with thee; [even] among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.

17 There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.

18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these [are] abomination unto the LORD thy God.

19 Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury; 20 Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

21 When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. 22 But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. 23 That which

is gone out of thy lips, thou shalt keep and perform; [even] a free-will offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

24 When thou comest unto thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put [any] in thy vessel. 25 When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The law of divorce; a new married man is to be exempt from war and civil offices for the space of a year; of pledges; of man-stealers; of leprosy; the hire of a servant is to be given; of doing justice to the friendless; and of charity.

1 WHEN a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give [it] in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's [wife.] 3 And [if] the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and give [it] in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her [to be] his wife; 4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that [is] abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance.

5 When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: [but] he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.

6 No man shall take the nether or the upper mill-stone to pledge: for he taketh [a man's] life to pledge.

7 If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you.

8 Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, [so] ye shall observe to do. 9 Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.

10 When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. 11 Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. 12 And if the man [be] poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge. 13 In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God.

14 Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant [that is] poor and needy, [whether he be] of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that [are] in thy land within thy gates: 15 At his day thou shalt give [him] his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he [is] poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee.

16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

17 Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, [nor] of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge: 18 But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

19 When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. 20 When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 21 When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean [it] afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 22 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

CHAPTER XXV.

Stripes must not exceed forty; the ox not to be muzzled; of raising seed unto a deceased brother; of immodesty in a woman; of unjust weights and measures; the memory of Amalek is to be blotted out.

1 IF there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that [the judges] may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. 2 And it shall be, if the wicked man [be] worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. 3 Forty stripes he may give him, [and] not exceed: lest [if] he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.

4 Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out [the corn.]

5 If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. 6 And it shall be, [that] the first-born which she beareth, shall succeed in the name of his brother [which is] dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. 7 And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and [if] he stand [to it,] and say, I like not to take her; 9 Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. 10 And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

11 When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh

him by the secrets: 12 Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity [her.]

13 Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. 14 Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. 15 [But] thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 16 For all that do such things, [and] all that do unrighteously, [are] an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

17 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; 18 How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, [even] all [that were] feeble behind thee, when thou [wast] faint and weary; and he feared not God. 19 Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance to possess it, [that] thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget [it.]

CHAPTER XXVI.

This chapter concludes Moses' account of the particular statutes which God gave to Israel; he prescribes a confession for those who offered the basket of first fruits, and who paid the third year's tithes; and enforces these things upon them by a solemn obligation.

1 AND it shall be, when thou [art] come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; 2 That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put [it] in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there*. 3 And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, *to the priest at that time in waiting*, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the

* This was offered at the feast of Pentecost. It consisted of the first fruits of their corn and trees, and was presented as a token of their homage to God. The same custom was practised among the heathens, who used to send their first fruits to Apollo, at Delphos, from all parts of the world.

LORD sware unto our fathers for to give us; *I thankfully acknowledge God's faithfulness to his promise in giving us the land of Canaan, and the obligation I am under to be faithful to him: on this tenure they held their land.* 4 And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God. 5 And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish [was] my father, *that is, Jacob, who lived twenty years in Syria, and was ready to perish through Esau's enmity, and Laban's cruelty, and the famine that brought him to Egypt*, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, *that is, seventy persons*, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: 6 And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage; *this must be remembered to promote their humility and gratitude:* 7 And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: 8 And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an out-stretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders; *thus God pitied, and delivered them:* 9 And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, [even] a land that floweth with milk and honey, *a pleasant and fruitful country.* 10 And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me; *then the priest was to give the basket to the officer, and he was to set it down before the sanctuary:* and thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God; *and this external adoration was to be attended with thankfulness and prayer.* 11 And thou shalt rejoice in every good [thing] which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that [is] among you; *feasting together with the Levites and strangers, upon the peace offerings they had brought thither, and which always attended the offering of the first fruits. The words may also refer to the peculiar satisfaction they would find in all their other enjoyments, when they had given to God his portion.*

12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, [which is] the year of tithing, and hast given [it] unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled*;

* In order to understand this, it must be remembered, that there was tithe paid in kind to all the Levites within their borders, out of this first tithe. The Levites

13 Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of [mine] house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten [them]*. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, *either in the time of mourning for dead friends, or rather, not with such mourning and lamentation as the Egyptians used, when they offered their first fruits to Isis and Bacchus, but with thankfulness to the only true God;* neither have I taken away [aught] thereof for [any] unclean [use,] *to any magical rite, or impure one, as was common with the Egyptians at the feast of their first fruits,* nor given [aught] thereof for the dead, *not consecrated it to their heroes and deified men, which was common in Egypt, and was made a law at Athens:* [but] I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, [and] have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. 15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey. *With the utmost propriety did they seek his blessing and mercy, when they could appeal to him that they had been obedient.*

16 This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments, *all the precepts of the foregoing chapter:* thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. 17 Thou hast avouched, *that is, solemnly professed and owned,* the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: 18 And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, *owned thee for such before all the world, giving thee peculiar laws, ordinances, and privileges,* as he hath promised thee, and that [thou] shouldest keep all his commandments; 19 And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise,

carried a tenth portion to Jerusalem, and paid it to the priests: then there was a second tithe which was paid either in kind or money; this was brought the first and second year after the sabbatical, or seventh, year, to Jerusalem, and made a kind of love-feast, to which the offerer invited his friends and the priest and Levites. But on the third year he carried it not to Jerusalem, but spent it at home within his gates, upon the Levite, the fatherless, and the widow. This they did on the third and sixth years, and therefore it is called *the year of tithing.* See chap. xiv. 18.

* This acknowledgment was to be made the next time they went up to Jerusalem, and was designed to prevent their defrauding the poor through a cruel and covetous disposition.

and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken: *all was designed to make them an high and holy people, that all nations might admire and magnify the honour God put upon them, and be led thereby to adore and reverence him.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. FROM hence we see that it is fit and reasonable we should *honour the Lord with our substance;* we shall thus keep up a remembrance that all comes from him. It is his own which we present to him; let us therefore *be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate* to our poorer brethren. Let us *lay by in store* for that purpose. This will make our comforts peculiarly sweet; and we shall be able to *rejoice in the good things which the Lord our God giveth us,* and shall bring his blessing on all we do and possess.

2. Let us frequently and seriously commemorate all the kind appearances of God for us and our country. Let us bless him for *the good land,* for all temporal and spiritual favours; and recollect from how low a beginning God hath raised us, and how often we have been in danger and distress, and God hath mercifully interposed. Anniversary days for doing this, are very proper, and agree with the design of the law in this chapter. And when we commemorate these mercies, let us also present our requests to God for future favours, as in ver. 15, *look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, a land flowing with milk and honey.* May we thus cultivate a public spirit, a tender concern for the peace and prosperity of our Israel, that *the land may yield its increase.*

3. It becomes us to embrace every opportunity of *avouching the Lord for our God,* of recognising our obligations to him, and diligently remembering them; and to be careful not to violate the sacred engagements we are under. Having *avouched the Lord for our God,* let us not be willing to go back; but be upright before him; remembering the dignity promised, ver. 19., *to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.* And may we especially look forward to the still greater dignity he intends for us in the

other world, and therefore be obedient. Nothing will afford us greater joy in life or death, than to be able to appeal to God, that we have not wilfully transgressed his commandments, but *have kept them, and loved them with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength,* and have humbly endeavoured, through divine grace, *to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless.*

CHAPTER XXVII.

Moses, having repeated the law and enforced the commands and covenant, that nothing might be left undone that was likely to affect the minds of the people, he proceeds to direct to some external means to promote the remembrance and observance of it; one was, to write the law upon stones, the other, to pronounce a blessing and a curse in a most solemn manner; both of which were to be done on their first entrance into Canaan.

1 AND Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. *The elders joined with Moses in doing this, lest the people should think their obligations were lessened when Moses was gone, or that the priests and Levites recommended it for their own private ends.* 2 And it shall be on the day, *on the first opportunity after your entrance into the land of Canaan,* when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: *these stones were for an altar, and for a memorial; they were to be unhewn and unpolished, to prevent any thing like an image being made, and then were to be plastered over.* 3 And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law*, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee. 4 Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, [that] ye shall set up these stones which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. 5 And there shalt thou build an

* Some say the ten commandments, and others, the whole of these five books of Moses; but most probably, only an abridgment of this book of Deuteronomy, or the blessings and curses here set down. Compare Joshua viii. 34.

altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up [any] iron [tool] upon them. 6 Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God: *the design of the altar was to offer sacrifices on, to renew their covenant, to acknowledge God's dominion, and that they held the land under him:* 7 And thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, *in token of being reconciled to God,* and rejoice before the LORD thy God. 8 And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly. *Thus their communion with God, their relation to him, and their obligations to obey him, were all recognised; while on the same altar, or monument of stone, peace offerings were presented, and the law was written.*

9 And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, *on that day when the altar was built,* saying, Take heed, and hearken, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God. 10 Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.

11 And Moses charged the people the same day, *about pronouncing the blessing and the curse**, saying, 12 These shall stand upon mount Gerizim, to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: 13 And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. *The mountains Gerizim and Ebal were so near, that the voice could be heard from one to the other, though there might be a deep valley between; see* Judges ix. 6. *This is no uncommon thing in a mountainous country.*

14 And the Levites† shall speak and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, 15 Cursed [be] the man that maketh [any] graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth [it] in [a] secret [place,] *in the most private chamber.* And all the people *that stood on mount Ebal,* shall answer and say, Amen, *so let it be;*

* This was mentioned before, ch. xi. 29, 30., but it was only to be done once. All the tribes of Israel were to divide, and half to stand on the ascent and top of one mountain, and half on the other.

† That is, the priests the Levites, for the common Levites stood upon mount Gerizim among the other tribes, *v.* 1. These stood in the valley, and looked to one hill or the other, as they pronounced the curse or the blessing; for both were pronounced, though one only is mentioned here. The blessing was, *Blessed be he that doeth not so and so,* &c.; and all the people on Gerizim answered, Amen.

I wish this curse may befall me if I be guilty of this crime. 16 Cursed [be] he that setteth light by his father or his mother, *that despiseth them in his heart, or secretly curseth them, for if he did it openly, he was to be stoned to death,* Lev. xx. 9. 17 And all the people shall say, Amen. 17 Cursed [be] he that removeth his neighbour's landmark, *with a design to defraud his neighbour, or increase his own possessions.* And all the people shall say, Amen. 18 Cursed [be] he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way, *who takes advantage of the ignorance of others, and gives them bad advice and wicked counsel.* And all the people shall say, Amen. 19 Cursed [be] he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow, *this means the poor in general. Agreeably to this division of them, Plato ordered the magistrate to be instead of a friend, a parent, and a husband to the poor.* And all the people shall say, Amen. 20 Cursed [be] he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen. 21 Cursed [be] he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen. 22 Cursed [be] he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. 23 Cursed [be] he that lieth with his mother-in-law. And all the people shall say, Amen. 24 Cursed [be] he that smiteth his neighbour secretly, *that committeth murder secretly, or that slanders him, defames him, takes away his good name: though these may go unpunished by men, the curse of God will follow such.* And all the people shall say, Amen. 25 Cursed [be] he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person, *that is, all corrupt judges, or false witnesses.* And all the people shall say, Amen. *Then the chapter and the solemnity conclude with a solemn curse.* 26 Cursed [be] he that confirmeth not [all] the words of this law to do them: *obedience confirms the law, while disobedience subverts it; destroys the end for which it was given, and, as far as lies in the offender's power, disannuls and abolishes it.* And all the people shall say, Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let us learn of how much consequence obedience to the law of God is, from the many methods which are taken to promote it; and never venture to make light of any of his commands, when so much has been done to give the people the highest vene-

ration for them, and the greatest opinion of their excellency, sanctity, and importance.

2. Let us *take heed to ourselves*, that we may avoid all those sins *for which the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.* There are no such forms of blessing and cursing under the gospel; yet all this is done, in effect, when we profess the religion of Jesus, in which *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men.* Especially when in a solemn manner, by baptism, or the Lord's supper, we enter ourselves into a christian covenant. This solemnity was designed to convince Israel, that God's threatenings were not idle terrors, but would be certainly accomplished; and we cannot but acknowledge this, if we believe the gospel. May we then *fly from the wrath to come;* and labour to be obedient to the will of God, that we may *inherit the blessing, even life for evermore.*

3. We should be thankful that *we are not under the law, but under grace. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.* Gal. iii. 10., where the apostle quotes these last words, to make christians sensible of their great privileges. We are still under the law as a rule of life; though blessed be God! not as a covenant of works. *We are justified freely by his grace, through faith. The scripture has included,* or shut up, *all under sin, that the promise by faith in Christ Jesus might be given to all them that believe.* As we are thus delivered from the terrors of mount Sinai, the curses of mount Ebal, and all the rigours of the Jewish dispensation, let us be more solicitous to walk in the fear and love of the LORD, and in the observance of his precepts. For he that despises and neglects the law of Christ, mild as the gospel dispensation is, *will fall into sorer condemnation than they who despised Moses' law, and yet died without mercy.*

CHAP. XXVIII. 1—44.

In this chapter the blessing and the curse are branched out into a variety of particulars, many of which were considered in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus.

1 AND it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe [and] to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD

thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. *They were already distinguished above other nations, but by this means their praise should be secured and increased.* 2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God; *they shall come unexpectedly, and therefore be most welcome and delightful.* 3 Blessed [shalt] thou [be] in the city, and blessed [shalt] thou [be] in the field, *the tradesman and husbandman should be so.* 4 Blessed [shall be] the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, *thy children shall be comforts to thee, thy corn, wine and oil, thine asses and camels, thy sheep and goats.* 5 Blessed [shall be] thy basket and thy store, *whatever they had in present use, or was laid by in store,* 6 Blessed [shalt] thou [be] when thou comest in, and blessed [shalt] thou [be] when thou goest out, *thou shalt be safe in travelling, find all well at home, and have good success in all thy affairs.* 7 The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways, *they shall have victory over their enemies, who should fly in confusion, and be totally defeated.* 8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy store-houses, *or barns,* and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee, *give thee all desirable prosperity,* in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 9 The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, *confirm his covenant with thee, by which he has separated thee to himself, as a holy and peculiar people,* as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. 10 And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee, *all people shall see that thou art the object of his care and blessing, and be afraid to have thee for their enemy.* 11 And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee; *thou shalt be so plenteous in every thing, that there shall be no occasion to send abroad for provisions and supplies.* 12 The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand*: and thou shalt lend unto many nations,

* The air is called God's good treasure, because he there gathers clouds and vapours, from whence he enriches the earth.

and thou shalt not borrow. *This was a sign of wealth, liberty, and authority, and that they were not in a state of dependance.* 13 And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath, *thou shalt be honourable and highly esteemed; other nations should be subject to them, and they should be free;* if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and do [them:] 14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day [to] the right hand or [to] the left, to go after other gods to serve them; *the condition is repeated; they must not turn aside to superstition, profaneness, or idolatry; all of which were hateful to God, and would forfeit all those blessings, as it follows.*

15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: *they shall follow thee wherever thou goest, mingle with every thing thou hast, shall disappoint thee in every thing thou shalt do, thou shalt have no comfort in any of thy undertakings at home or abroad.* 16 Cursed [shalt] thou [be] in the city, and cursed [shalt] thou [be] in the field. 17 Cursed [shall be] thy basket and thy store. 18 Cursed [shall be] the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. 19 Cursed [shalt] thou [be] when thou comest in, and cursed [shalt] thou [be] when thou goest out. 20 The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, *thou shalt have cross providences, sharp afflictions, and all thy comforts embittered,* until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. 21 The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. 22 The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish, *the pestilence, or other bodily diseases, shall sweep thee away.* 23 And thy heaven that [is] over thy head, *the cloud that hangs over thy country,* shall be brass, and the earth that [is] under thee [shall be] iron. 24 The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust *to destroy thy remaining fruits:* from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed,

there shall be clouds of dust, almost enough to stifle thee; and famine shall follow, till thou art destroyed. 25 The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, *go out in great multitudes, and soon be scattered:* and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, *be tossed up and down like vagabonds. All which was fulfilled at their captivity,* Neh. i. 8. 26 And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray [them] away*. 27 The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed; *these were part of the plagues of Egypt, which they well remembered.* 28 The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart, *thou shalt have horror and distress of mind; such confusion as not to know what to do; like a blind man, thou shalt take the wrong way, and then be made to know that thou hast taken it.* 29 And thou shalt grope at noon-day, as the blind gropeth in darkness, *mistake in the plainest and most evident matters;* and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save [thee,] *one oppression shall follow another, and those that take thee under their protection shall be the first to injure and wrong thee.* 30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof, *all thy dearest property and goods shall be taken away by violence.* 31 Thine ox [shall be] slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass [shall be] violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep [shall be] given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue [them.] 32 Thy sons and thy daughtess [shall be] given unto another people, *shall be carried captive, and sold for slaves;* and thine eyes shall look, and fail [with longing] for them all the day long, *there shall be no hope of seeing them again, no friend, no ally, to interpose,* and [there shall be] no might in thine hand *to rescue them, nor money to ransom them.* 33 The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway†: 34 So

* Nothing could be a greater calamity in the esteem of the Jews, than to have dead bodies thus exposed and consumed by birds of prey, and no one have so much compassion as to drive them away, and bury the remains.

† This was the case in the Assyrian and Babylonish captivity; and it was so

that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see, *many accordingly destroyed themselves through anguish and despair.* 35 The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head, *so that thou shalt not be able to resist, because of thy own sickness and weakness.* 36 The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone, *either by persuasion or force.* 37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, *thy calamities shall be so great, that thy very enemies shall be astonished at them,* a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee, *thy miseries shall be used proverbially to express great calamities; and they shall sport themselves in thy miseries, saying, These are the people of the Lord,* &c.*. 38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather [but] little in; for the locust shall consume it. 39 Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress [them,] but shalt neither drink [of] the wine, nor gather [the grapes;] for the worms shall eat them. 40 Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint [thyself] with the oil; for thine olive shall cast [his fruit,] *shall be blasted in the very blossom.* 41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity. 42 All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume. 43 The stranger that [is] within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low, *those who formerly served thee, shall now get above and insult thee.* 44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail. *Thus the promise of God to exalt his people, and confound their foes, is quite reversed, and Israel should become poor, mean, and contemptible.*

REFLECTION.

SEE what a constant dependance we have upon God, and how solicitous we should be to secure his friendship. We need his

remarkable as not to be accounted for, without the immediate hand of God to fulfil these awful threatenings.

* This was fulfilled in their captivity; but more especially since their dispersion by the Romans; they are a common proverb through the earth, 'You use me like a Jew, you would not have done so to a Jew,' that is, to one of the worst of men.

favour and blessing in every circumstance of life, even the most minute and inconsiderable. We depend upon him for rain and sunshine, for food, protection, health, and children, and every other mercy. He can easily take them away if we displease him, and bring upon us the curses here threatened. He can disappoint us in our most agreeable hopes, and send us unutterable anguish of body and mind. All blessings are in his good treasure, and all curses at his command. May we be solicitous, therefore, *to acquaint ourselves with God; to lay hold on his strength*, and seek pardon and peace, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*, that so he may be our friend. *The blessing and the curse are set before us.* Let us then *serve God, and keep his commandments, and we shall inherit the blessing* promised in his word to those, who by a *patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality.*

CHAP. XXVIII. 45, to the end.

The blessing and curses continued. This part of them refers to the dispersion and destruction of the Jews by the Romans, and is as remarkable a prediction, and was as signally accomplished, as any in the Old Testament.

45 MOREOVER all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed, *one punishment shall follow another, till you are brought to ruin, and are more miserable than any other nation; and the reason is,* because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: 46 And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever, *the curse shall remain fixed upon them, and all shall take notice of it, as an extraordinary mark of God's displeasure.* Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all [things;] 48 Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all [things:] and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee; *because they served not God in the way he required, they should serve their enemies, lose their liberty, sink into dreadful*

slavery, under a hard yoke from which they could not free themselves. 49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, [as swift] as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand*; 50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young, *a stern, bold, hard-hearted people, inflexibly pursuing their own designs; which was the exact character of the old Romans: and though in other wars the conquerors usually pitied the old and the young, yet in the war with the Jews they spared no one.* 51 And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which [also] shall not leave thee [either] corn, wine, or oil, [or] the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee, *the country should be destroyed by their vast armies.* 52 And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. *The Jews fled to their fenced cities where provisions were laid up, but the walls of most of them, even of Jerusalem itself, were broken down.* 53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee; *this was actually the case when besieged by the Romans:* 54 [So that] the man [that is] tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: 55 So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat, *he shall grudge every morsel that he sees his nearest relations eat; shall be ready to snatch it from them; yea, even to eat and devour them, and not allow them to feed upon his own children, which he is forced to eat:* because he hath nothing left them in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. 56 The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her

* Some of the Jewish doctors say, this is a prophecy of their destruction by the Romans, and indeed nothing is here mentioned but what was literally applicable to that dreadful event. The soldiers in Titus's army were from France, Spain, Britain, and the ends of the earth; the eagle was their standard, and their language was unknown to the Jews, which was not entirely the case with the Chaldee language.

bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter. 57 And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all [things] secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates*. 58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; 59 Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, *uncommon, and surprising to all the world*, and the plagues of thy seed, [even] great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance; *accordingly they and their seed have been plagued in almost every nation under heaven.* 60 Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. 61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which [is] not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed†. 62 And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldst not obey the voice of the LORD thy God‡. 63 And it shall come to pass, [that] as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it: *God takes no pleasure in the death of sinners, but he delights to glorify his justice, takes pleasure in asserting the honour of his government, and in securing the designs of it, therefore he plucked them off the land*§. 64 And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other‖; and there thou

* Accordingly, Josephus tells us, that after eating dogs, horses, cats, *&c.*, they ate their own children privately, and let none share with them. He particularly mentions a noble matron, who boiled part of her child during the siege, but the mob smelling the meat, broke in, and to them she offered the rest.

† This also is a fact, for in almost every nation they have been tortured and destroyed a thousand ways, and exposed to all the sicknesses that hunger, nakedness, and wandering about, could bring upon them.

‡ This was remarkably the case when Jerusalem was taken, some say a million perished in the city by famine and the sword, and many hundred thousands in other parts of the kingdom.

§ Titus carried away ninety thousand captives; Adrian soon after slew five hundred thousand; and the senate joined with him in a decree, that no Jew should ever come within Judea, on pain of death; this he did out of policy, but he was fulfilling this word of the Lord.

‖ This was the natural effect of the decree above-mentioned. Some were carried to Spain, multitudes fled to Babylon, and the East; they were scattered over all the earth, but still continued distinct from all other nations, which is a standing miracle to this day.

shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, [even] wood and stone*. 65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, *no settlement, but be continually removed from place to place,* neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind, *they should always be in dread of some new mischief*†. 66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: 67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see, *on account of dreadful apprehensions in the night, and lamentable sights by day.* 68 And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again, *to be slaves again there*‡, with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy [you §.]

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE should consider the prophecy in this chapter, as a glorious confirmation of the truth of the sacred writings, and a proof that Moses was a divinely inspired prophet. The words are fulfilled in every succeeding age to this day, in all the calamities of the Jews. The contempt they suffer in every nation, the marks of infamy that are put upon them, and the blindness of their hearts, are unanswerable arguments for the truth of christianity. Every Jew we see, is a kind of miraculous attestation that *Jesus is the true Messiah,* and that *the scriptures were given by divine inspiration.*

* I make no doubt this refers to their being obliged to turn Christians in popish countries, and to worship their idols; this they were obliged to do in Spain and Portugal.

† Hence Juvenal calls them, in contempt, *trembling Jews;* their eyes failed in looking for relief, and they had sorrow of mind on account of their sufferings.

‡ So it came to pass at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, when multitudes of them were carried into Egypt and sold there for slaves.

§ Titus commanded all under seventeen years of age to be sold, and in such numbers, that thirty of them were sold for a small piece of money. Adrian sold them in a fair, like horses, and for the same price. Such multitudes were often exposed to sale, that there were not persons enough to buy them; and they were sent into confinement, and that so strict and severe, till they died by hundreds and thousands together; and in general they were looked upon in so contemptible a light, that men would not have them even for slaves; in so remarkable a manner have these awful denunciations been fulfilled.

2. We find here many important branches of duty pointed out. Let us hearken to God's voice, observe his commands, his whole law, not turning aside to the right hand or to the left. Let us serve God with cheerfulness and gladness; serve him with all our good things. The more we have, the more cheerfully we should serve him; not with reluctance, but with pleasure and delight. Let us fear that awful name, JEHOVAH, the self-existent, unchangeable, eternal, and covenant-keeping God; that so his blessing may continually overtake us.

3. Let us *stand in awe, and sin not;* for the whole chapter assures us, that *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Mr. Henry relates an account of a wicked man, who, upon reading the threatenings in this chapter, was so enraged, that he tore the leaf out of his bible. But to what purpose is it to deface the copy, while the original remains upon record in the divine counsel? By that it is unalterably determined, that *the wages of sin is death, whether we hear, or whether we forbear.* When we hear these words, justly may *our flesh tremble for fear of God's righteous judgments.* May we be thankful that the miseries here threatened have not fallen to the lot of our own country. May we also dread *the curse of God* that follows wicked men wherever they go, that mixes with all their enjoyments, embitters all their comforts, and obscures all their hopes. What various terrible judgments has God in store for the wicked! *Divers arrows are in his quiver;* but the worst of all is, that astonishment, that sorrow of mind, a guilty conscience, a trembling heart, which he here declares will reach the sinner every where. Alas! *whose heart can endure, whose hand be strong,* in that day? May we be careful then, not to *provoke the Lord to anger.* Oh that we might this day *kiss the Son, lest he be angry!* Oh that these *curses of the law* may now be as *a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ!* that *being justified by him,* we may be *delivered from the curses of the law,* have peace and security, and maintain his friendship; for *happy is the man that is in such a case,* yea, *happy the people whose God is the Lord.*

CHAPTER XXIX.

We have here the renewal of the covenant between God and Israel; the persons who were to enter into it; and the terrible consequences of breaking it.

1 THESE [are] the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he made with them in Horeb. *Moses was just about to die, and Israel to enter into Canaan; therefore, to secure their obedience, he enters them into another covenant, of the same nature, but something different from the former. The greater part of them were a new generation, and therefore it was fit the covenant should be renewed.* 2 And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all *the wonderful works* that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land, 3 The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, *the trials God had made whether Israel would serve him or not,* the signs, and those great miracles: 4 Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day; *though you have seen those things, yet you have not duly considered and improved them. God would have given you grace to do this, but you were not disposed to observe and learn: it is a just punishment for your sin.* 5 And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot, *they are the same you put on when you came out of Egypt.* 6 Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink, *but have had manna from heaven, and water from the rock, without your own care and labour:* that ye might know that I [am] the LORD your God. 7 And when ye came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them: 8 And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh. *In this you see the power, faithfulness, and goodness of God;* 9 Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.

10 Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God, *to enter into covenant with him,* your captains of your tribes, your

elders, and your officers, [with] all the men of Israel, 11 Your little ones*, your wives, and thy stranger that [is] in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water, *all that came out of Egypt with thee,* (Exodus xii. 38.), *and such as have since joined themselves to the congregation,* (Josh. ix. 21, 27.): 12 That thou shouldst enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, *the covenant confirmed with an oath,* which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: 13 That he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and [that] he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, *that he may confirm thy privileges, and abundantly bless thee.* 14 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; 15 But with [him] that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with [him] that [is] not here with us this day, *with all who are necessarily absent, with all your posterity, and with all who may hereafter join themselves to you:* 16 (For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt; and how we came through the nations which ye passed by, *what difficulties we encountered there:* 17 And ye have seen their abominations and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which [were] among them: *ye have seen how unable these were to help them, and how some of us have been remarkably punished for being led away by them; we have need therefore to be cautious, and bind ourselves firmly to Jehovah:)* 18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go [and] serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood†; 19 And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, *I shall be prosperous let me worship what god I will,* though I walk in the imagination, *or stubbornness,* of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst‡, *that is, one sin to another. Yet, whatever he may think or say,* 20 The LORD will not spare him: but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, *the*

* These were capable of being taken into the covenant, and admitted with their parents; so it is under the New Testament, as well as the Old.

† These words have a reference to ver. 15. The covenant was made with all persons, lest there should be any, who, concealing themselves like a root under ground, should spring up and poison others, like some baneful herb among corn, and thus draw them to idolatry, which is displeasing to God, and will prove bitterness in the end.

‡ Some refer these words to the revellings and debauchery that attended their idol feasts.

highest degree of anger, the just displeasure of incensed majesty, shall break forth with fury and terror against him, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, *not only fall but continue upon him;* and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven, *neither he nor his children shall be known any more.* 21 And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law, *if there is but one such sinner in a tribe, God will find him out, separate him, and make him a public, notorious example; he shall be marked out for misery, according to all the dreadful curses of this book; and if this root of bitterness spreads through the nation, it will bring destruction upon them all.* 22 So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it; 23 [And that] the whole land thereof [is] brimstone and salt, [and] burning, *become barren and desolate, like Sodom of old,* [that] it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger and in his wrath*: 24 Even all nations shall say, *neighbours, travellers, succeeding generations, shall inquire,* Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this *good, this fruitful, populous, and holy* land? what [meaneth] the heat of this great anger? 25 Then men shall say, *the pious Jews who remain, and others, shall reply,* Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: 26 For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and [whom] he had not given unto them, *or, who had not given to them any portion, could not help, save, nor prosper them:* 27 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book: 28 And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger and in wrath and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as [it is] this day†. *It would be natural for men to ask, when these curses should be executed; why the Jews*

* This was true of Judea when laid waste by Titus and Adrian.

† This was remarkably accomplished; the Jews themselves owned that God fought against them; Titus himself owned this, and acknowledged, that without it he never could have taken Jerusalem. The chapter concludes with a very remarkable passage.

should be punished worse than other nations, and what shall become of them afterwards? and Moses, to silence all vain curiosity, and check every impertinent inquiry, adds, 29 The secret [things belong] unto the LORD our God: but those [things which are] revealed [belong] unto us and to our children for ever, that [we] may do all the words of this law: *God will not give account of these matters; our duty is clearly revealed, let us attend to that; mind the word of the Lord, and not trouble ourselves about times and seasons, which God has reserved in his own power.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE learn hence, that it is the duty of all to enter into God's covenant, to *keep the words of it, and do them,* if they desire prosperity and a blessing. All Israel is required to do so, judges, officers, particular families, with their wives and children. The christian dispensation is a covenant of grace and mercy; Jehovah, our God, proposes certain terms, and requires that we consent to them, and that we do it reverently and fervently. And since God condescends to admit his children into covenant, it behoves them to be faithful to it. Our general profession of christianity is an obligation upon us; more especially the Lord's supper. We are obliged in gratitude, considering what God hath done for us. Our interest also depends upon it, and faithfulness requires it. Let us then duly consider the honourable relation in which we stand, and the innumerable obligations laid upon us, as the strongest reasons why we should be faithful in God's covenant. May we frequently recognise it, review our engagements, and refresh our minds with the memory of them.

2. Those that expect peace and security in a wicked way, sadly deceive themselves. There is not a more awful threatening against presumptuous sinners in the whole book of God, than that in *v.* 20, 21. *The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law.* Too many are ready to promise themselves peace; they think *God is such a one as themselves;* that he is too merciful to punish; but they will find themselves mistaken. They will flatter

themselves in their own eyes, but *God will reprove them.* He has peculiar punishments for those who live in iniquity, or neglect their known duty, while they satisfy themselves with such excuses. God can distinguish such presumptuous sinners as they are; though there should be but one in a nation, he will find him out, and make his punishment remarkable. Let drunkards, especially, take warning; if they think to escape divine wrath, they deceive themselves. Let us, therefore, *stand in awe, and sin not;* be careful to guard against the snares of evil company, lest others seduce us, corrupt our morals, or poison our minds. So the apostle exhorts, Heb. xii. 15., where there is an evident allusion to this passage, *looking diligently lest any one fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.*

3. Let us attend to the plain intimations of the divine will, and not be solicitous about secret things, by inquiring into futurity, or what shall hereafter happen; to know our fortune, as it is called; which is very foolish and ridiculous, as well as affronting to God. It is unprofitable for us to spend our zeal about those things which are above our comprehension, even in the word of God. But too many talk of mysteries, and contend for them, while they acknowledge they are above their comprehension, who yet neglect the plain rules of duty. God hath given us a law to walk by; every thing in it is of great importance, is plain and clear. Let us then take heed to them; and instead of busying ourselves about those things in which we can never gain an absolute certainty, let us mind *the words of the Lord, and do them;* and thus, as it is said, *v.* 9., *we shall prosper in all that we do.*

CHAPTER XXX.

Terrible threatenings are recorded in the last chapter; in this, mercy is promised to the penitent; death and life are set before the people.

1 AND it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call [them] to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, 2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to

all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; *here is a good description of repentance; it is calling to mind the blessings they had lost, and their present misery; it is returning to God, to his worship and service; to obey his commands, and that sincerely and affectionately; and teaching their children to do so from a principle of reverence and love; and it shall come to pass, when this is the case,* 3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee*. 4 If [any] of thine be driven out unto the outmost [parts] of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee; *though now they are more scattered than they ever were before, into more distant nations, and wider from each other, yet, if they repent, they shall all be restored to their own land:* 5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers†. 6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live, *they shall first be convinced, and humbled, and sanctified, and then be brought back and prospered. The Jews refer this to the days of the Messiah.* 7 And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. *Thus God shall become a defence to them by the ruin of their enemies.* 8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day, *they shall continue steadfast in love and obedience to God.* 9 And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers; *they shall have great prosperity, and this shall be for their good, and not a snare to them: their hearts being changed, they should employ it cheerfully and faithfully in God's service, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did, in whose obedience God delighted:* 10 If thou shalt

* This was fulfilled in their return from the Babylonish captivity, and will yet have a further accomplishment.

† After their return from the captivity they were great and numerous, but were often oppressed by the Persians and Grecians, and at length destroyed by the Romans; so that this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, when they shall see their crime in crucifying Christ.

hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, [and] if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. *This shows the promise was conditional; provided they did not receive the grace of God in vain, but kept his commandments and his statutes with all their heart.*

Now if any should object that they would keep them if they knew them, Moses adds, 11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it [is] not hidden from thee, neither [is] it far off, *it is not too wonderful for thee, above thy capacity, and hard to be understood; nor far off, ye need not go to other nations to learn it, as some of the Greek philosophers did to seek for wisdom.* 12 It [is] not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 13 Neither [is] it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 14 But the word [is] very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it; *it is delivered by Moses in the plainest manner, the priests and Levites daily teach it; it is so familiar, that you have it in your common discourse, and can teach it your children; and all for this end, that thou mayest practise what thou knowest.*

15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, *all manner of blessings, if thou art obedient,* and death and evil, *all kinds of misery, if thou dost act otherwise;* 16 In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply; and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it, *here he explains the good, and in the next verse the evil:* 17 But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; 18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, [and that] ye shall not prolong [your] days upon the land, whither thou passeth over Jordan to go to possess it. *And to make this matter more solemn, he adds,* 19 I call heaven and earth, *God, and angels, and men,* to record this day against you, [that] I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; *he uses these various words to impress their minds, and to convince them that both come from God;* therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; *be obedient and thou shalt be happy. He then sums up the whole;* 20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, *this is the noblest*

spring of religion, [and] that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him, *it will keep thee from idolatry, and secure thy obedience and happiness:* for he [is] thy life, *the author and preserver of it,* and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them *and their seed after them.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE promises at the beginning of the chapter furnish great encouragement to pray for the Jews. ver. 3—5. *The Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.* Although they are now obstinate and wicked, and blaspheme the name and religion of Jesus, yet they shall be called; God has not absolutely cast them off. He exhibits them as monuments of his justice, and as a standing miracle in support of the gospel; and in due time the whole world shall witness their restoration to their own land, and their acknowledgment of the Messiah. In dependance on this promise, which is confirmed by the New Testament, let us bear them upon our spirits before God. So Paul, *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved.*

2. Before the heart can love and obey God's commandments, it must be circumcised, that is, its perverseness and obstinacy must be removed, its corruptions mortified, its filth taken away, and its lusts subdued. This is God's work. It should be diligently sought by those who are strangers to the love and service of God; and parents should earnestly seek it for their children. However hard and obstinate the human heart is, God can soften and subdue it. Let us pray that he would *shed abroad his love in our hearts,* and dispose them more and more to his service.

3. Let those who live in the neglect of their duty, know and be assured, that they have no excuse for so doing. *For this commandment which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off,* ver. 11. Their duty is plainly laid before them, and it is easy to be practised. *Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? or who shall descend into the deep? The word of the Lord is nigh unto thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.*

Rom. x. 6, 8. The gospel of Christ is much more plain and easy. You hear it every Lord's day, and oftener; it is read and preached among you; it is in your hands; you speak of it; therefore great is your guilt, and great will be your misery, if you do it not. *The servant who knows his Lord's will, and doeth it not, will be beaten with many stripes.* The path of duty is no less easy than it is plain. It is not a burden and grief, as Satan and wicked men would represent it; it is pleasant and delightful here, and leads to everlasting happiness hereafter. Let us see to it, then, that we keep the word of Christ, and walk in his ways; for *his yoke is easy, and his burden is light.*

4. Since a blessing and a curse are so plainly set before us, let us *choose life, that both we and our seed may live,* ver. 19. The more seriously, frequently and solemnly, a law is urged and enforced, the greater the obligation is to observe it. We naturally seek good, and shun evil; love life, and fear death. Hope and fear are our most governing principles. God addresses himself to both of these. He promises the greatest good, and threatens the greatest evils: and after all, he deals with us as rational creatures, and free agents; proposing to our choice life or death. They who, through grace, choose life, and pursue it accordingly, shall have it. They who choose and pursue death, must blame themselves alone for the consequences. God offers life, but they disregard it. Thus fairly and equitably the law dealt with men, and so does the gospel also. Therefore, *let us choose life, that we may live.*

CHAPTER XXXI.

Moses encourages the people and Joshua; he delivers the law unto the priests, to be read every seventh year to the people; God giveth a charge to Joshua; and a song for the instruction of the people.

1 AND Moses, *on another occasion, just before his death, when he had called the people together,* went and spake these words unto all Israel. 2 And he said unto them, I [am] an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in, *I can no longer discharge the office of a commander and a governor:* also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan, *I am therefore come to take my final leave of you.* 3 The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, *the ark as a token of*

his presence will go with you, till ye possess the land; [and] he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: [and] Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said, *and be your commander in my stead.* 4 And the LORD shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed; *let your former experience encourage your hopes of success.* 5 And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you, *that is, to destroy them, and their altars, images, and groves, and root idolatry out of the land.* 6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he [it is] that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee; *do not distrust God, as your fathers did; fear not their numbers, their stature, or strength, for God will go with you. The words are here addressed to all Israel, and afterwards to Joshua.*

7 And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, *to give them greater reverence for his person and authority, and engage them to follow his directions,* Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. 8 And the LORD, he [it is] that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed. *Though Joshua was a brave man, he needed this encouragement, considering the difficulties that were before him, and the temper of the people; and there could be no stronger motives to be courageous than these.*

9 And Moses wrote this law, *that is, he put a finishing hand to the whole law or doctrine contained in these five books,* and *he* delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel *. 10 And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of [every] seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, 11 When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing, *as Ezra read it,* Neh. viii. 1., &c. †. 12 Gather the people together, men, and

* He gave the original copy to the priests, to be kept safely by them; and probably gave a copy to the elders of Israel, or heads of each tribe, for the use of that tribe, and each of these original copies might be signed by himself.

† They were to read the original copy, for the greater solemnity, and that other

women, and children, *though these were not bound to come to the feast, yet many times they brought them,* and thy stranger that [is] within thy gates, *all the proselytes to the Jewish religion,* that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: 13 And [that] their children, which have not known [any thing,] *have not seen God's wonders and miracles,* may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, *in that part of the court which was before the door of the tabernacle: this was done in the sight of the people, to increase their reverence for Joshua, and to give him greater authority.* 15 And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle, *that is, the cloud which was usually over the tabernacle, came down and stood at the door.*

16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep *(in the Hebrew, lie down,)* with thy fathers, *which intimates that he should awake, and rise again;* and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go [to be] among them, *the Canaanites that were estranged from God and his people,* and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. 17 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, *when they have thus broken their marriage covenant with me;* and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God [is] not among us? *So it was upon every revolt, God withdrew his protection, and delivered them to their enemies.* 18 And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods. 19 Now therefore write ye this song for you, *(recorded in the next chapter)* and teach it the children of Israel†: put it in their mouths, that

copies might be corrected by it. Joshua was to do this during his life, and afterwards, the Jews say, the supreme governor, or king. They began to read it the first day of the feast, and continued till it was read throughout.

† This was the ancient way of instruction: ancient law-givers delivered their laws in verse, and occasioned them to be sung at their festivals.

this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel, *a witness of my kindness, in giving them so many blessings; of my patience, in bearing so long with them; and of my justice, in punishing such an ungrateful and perverse people.* 20 For when I shall have brought them into the land which I sware unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. 21 And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed, *they shall have sad occasion to remember it, when they feel the dreadful calamities mentioned in it;* for I know their imagination, *their proneness to idolatry, and backsliding,* which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I sware. 22 *And* Moses therefore *by divine inspiration,* wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.

23 And he, *that is, Jehovah,* gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and I will be with thee, *how bad soever they are, or may be, I will be with thee, and give thee success.* 24 And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, 25 That Moses commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, 26 Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee, *or by the side of the ark, with Aaron's rod and the manna; that is, in some chest that was set by it; for there was nothing in the ark, but the two tables of the law,* 1 Kings viii. 9. *This was the book that was found,* 2 Kings xxii. 1. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14. 27 For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death? *He mentions nothing of their rebellions against him, these were forgiven and forgotten, but only those against God.* 28 Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them; *that I may deliver the song to them, and that they may distribute it to the several tribes and families; and that all the world may witness how ungrateful and wicked they will be if they revolt after so much has been done for them. But he*

did this with a bleeding heart, 29 For, *he adds,* I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt [yourselves,] and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands. *It was a melancholy thing for Moses to leave them with such a prospect, to see no better effect of his labours; but he had done his duty; God would remember and reward him, and the guilt would be theirs.* 30 And Moses *then* spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE promise of God's presence and assistance, is sufficient encouragement for us to undertake the hardest work, and encounter the greatest difficulties. This encouraged the Israelites to march towards Canaan, and this encouraged Joshua to lead them, although the people were perverse, though the service was difficult, and though coming after a man so eminent as Moses. The promise, *I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee,* is applied to all christians, Heb. xiii. 5. Depend therefore on the care and power of God; let us boldly say, *The Lord is my helper;* and fear no danger in the way of duty. God will be with us in our spiritual combats. Let us not reason with flesh and blood, nor say, How shall I overcome unruly appetites, or principalities and powers? *If we seek him,* he will assist us; and so *we shall be more than conquerors. Be strong then, and of good courage, for greater is he that is with you, than those which are against you.*

2. The public reading of God's law, is a very important and useful service. Moses read it in the synagogue every sabbath-day, especially every sabbatical year. So the christian oracles should be read; this was the custom of the primitive churches, and is proper to be retained to this day. It is doing public honour to God's word, conveys useful instruction to children, and to those who cannot read, or but very little; and things are more strongly impressed on the mind, which are done in a solemn assembly. How much reason is there to be thankful that we have a written law! It reaches to all nations, and even to places where no living preacher ever came. It is good to hear it read in public; let us not look upon it as a matter of form, but seriously attend to it; *be doers of the word, and not hearers only.*

3. All the methods of religious instruction that we have received,

will be witnesses against us if we prove rebellious. *Put this song into their mouths, that it may be a witness for me against the children of Israel,* ver. 19. This was the charge to Israel; the law written, read, or sung, were all witnesses against Israel's disobedience, and aggravated their guilt. The reason holds equally strong with regard to ourselves. We have the word, sacraments, and prayer; the word read, expounded, or preached; and prayer in public or private. All which will be witnesses against us, if we continue ignorant, impenitent, and disobedient; all will be witnesses for God, that he has not been wanting on his part; and all will make our condemnation the more intolerable.

4. Let us learn from the whole chapter, that it is the duty of aged and dying saints to do all they can to promote religion. Moses chargeth Joshua and Israel again and again; now, when he was going to his fathers. Aged christians have but a little time to live, their faculties are impaired, their hands are weakened; but still they may be serviceable. Let them charge their families and successors to serve God, to *be strong*. Let them recommend religion to them, and encourage them to serve the Lord; *set before them good and evil.* If your prospects are but melancholy, as Moses' was concerning Israel, still do your duty. *Exhort, reprove, rebuke;* bear testimony to the truth and comforts of religion; that your exhortations may be a witness against those of your descendants and relations that forsake God, and be witnesses for you at his bar, that you were faithful. Thus *David,* when he was old and grey-headed, *shewed God's strength to that generation, and his power, righteousness, and goodness, to those that were to come after him.*

CHAP. XXXII. 1—25.

Moses' song, which sets forth the perfections of God; his special goodness to his people; their ingratitude and apostacy; and God's displeasure and vengeance. The Jews call this song the epitome of the whole pentateuch. It contains a very useful and constant admonition to Israel. The first three verses are the preface to it.

1 GIVE ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. *He calls on the whole creation to attend, and witness the truth of what he said, and the perverseness of Israel*

if they forsook God. 2 My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass, *or rather, Let it do so; let it become profitable to mollify, and make you fruitful:* 3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD, *celebrate his attributes, and publish his glorious excellency:* ascribe ye greatness unto our God, *do you also own and acknowledge them, and attend with diligence and reverence.* 4 [He is] the Rock, *a firm, everlasting refuge,* his work [is] perfect, *his works of creation and providence:* for all his ways [are] judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right [is] he, *righteous in whatsoever he doeth, his dealings with his people have been exactly just, and holy in the highest degree of perfection.* 5 They have corrupted themselves, their spot [is] not [the spot] of his children: [they are] a perverse and crooked generation, *they are an untoward generation, that walk contrary to God in all their ways; they did not behave like God's children. He then expostulates with them;* 6 Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? [Is] not he thy father [that] hath bought thee, *delivered thee from Egyptian slavery?* hath he not made thee, and established thee, *formed thee into a people, given thee good laws, and often confirmed his grace towards thee?*

7 Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee; *consult ancient records, advise with old men, who have seen God's wonders in Egypt; ask Caleb and Joshua, and the Levites, and they will tell thee.* 8 When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel, *he thought of them when he divided the earth among the sons of Noah, when he scattered the nations into various parts of the earth, and gave those that were to inhabit Canaan so large a share, as might be fully sufficient for his own numerous people, when they came to possess it.* 9 For the LORD's portion [is] his people; Jacob [is] the lot of his inheritance, *they are his special care, his peculiar people, and have distinguished privileges.* 10 He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye, *he found him in a place destitute of convenience and comfort, amidst the howling of birds and beasts of prey; he conducted him from place to place, and gave him good laws; protected him from danger, in the kindest manner,*

as a man takes care of his eye, the tenderest and most useful part; and this he illustrates by a most beautiful image; 11 As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, *as an eagle forces her young ones from the nest, teaching them how to fly, and carries them on her wings when they are in danger;* 12 [So] the LORD alone did lead him, and [there was] no strange god with him; *with such tenderness and care did the Lord deliver them out of Egypt, and carry them to Canaan.* 13 He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields, *subdue the mountainous places and strong holds of their enemies, and possess a land far excelling others for all commodities;* and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock, *pleasant, delicious fruits of trees growing upon rocky ground;* 14 Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape, *they had abundance of the finest cattle, the largest wheat, and richest wines.*

15 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked, *Israel, who had the vision of God, and a clear revelation, grew proud, and, like a fat beast, kicked against the ground;* thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered [with fatness;] then he forsook God [which] made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation, *forsook God who was so kind to them; abhorred their Creator, contemned his laws, and grew insolent and rebellious, and those light thoughts of God begat idolatry.* 16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange [gods,] with abominations provoked they him to anger. 17 They sacrificed unto devils, *to demons, the souls of departed men, or evil spirits,* not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new [gods that] came newly up, whom your fathers feared not, *or which were not God, such as the golden calf, Baal, or Molech, new invented gods, who never gave them any good thing.* 18 Of the Rock [that] begat thee, *thy strong and almighty God,* thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee, *thy maker and benefactor.*

19 And when the LORD saw [it,] he abhorred [them,] because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters, *they discovered the ingratitude and rebellion of a wicked child, to a kind, indulgent parent.* 20 And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end [shall be:] for they [are] a very froward generation, children in whom [is] no faith, *this was a punishment*

answerable to their sin. I will shew my displeasure; I will let them see what a friend they have lost, and what will become of them when I forsake them, because they are children of no faith, who have broken their covenant so often that they are not to be trusted. 21 They have moved me to jealousy with [that which is] not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with [those which are] not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation; *they had provoked God with vain and despicable deities, and he would vex them with a despicable people, that is, the Canaanites, who were left among them.* 22 For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains; *vehement and dreadful judgment should come upon them, that should ruin all their enjoyments, make utter desolation of their country, even the strongest places of the land, yea Jerusalem itself, founded on the holy mountains, was destroyed by the fire of God's wrath.* 23 I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them; *one evil shall be heaped upon another, and all his dreadful arrows should come swiftly and suddenly, till the whole quiver was exhausted; these arrows are then particularly mentioned.* 24 [They shall be] burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. 25 The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling [also] with the man of grey hairs; *the famine, the pestilence, and the sword, should destroy all without distinction.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. We learn hence, that we should endeavour to cultivate a due sense of the divine attributes. Greatness is ascribed to God, *v.* 3. High and honourable thoughts of him may keep us from sin, and lead us to duty. It is a delightful view that is given of him, *v.* 4. *He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth without iniquity, just and right is he.* All his works are perfect, but men's works are imperfect. What are all men compared with this wise, just, and faithful God! May we trust in him, and devote ourselves to him.

2. To neglect this God is the highest degree of folly and ingratitude. He bought us; he purchased us with the blood of his

Son; he gives us every blessing. What then does he deserve at our hands! To sin against him, and to neglect him, is the basest ingratitude, the greatest folly, because there is none so good, or so great, as he is; he is able both to save and to destroy.

3. The hand of God is to be owned in the divisions of nations, and in fixing the abodes of men. This is not the work of chance; we see much wisdom at present displayed in it. How very extensive his views with respect to the Canaanites and Israelites! *Known to God are all his works from the beginning.* This thought should make us contented with our lot, and comfort our hearts amidst the confusions of the world. All things are ordered by Providence, and tend to the good of the church.

4. The sins of God's peculiar people are greatly aggravated: *The Lord abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters.* The more favours we have received, the more solemn obligations we are under, the more will he be displeased if we sin against him, and the more remarkable will be our punishment. Therefore *serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him with trembling.*

CHAP. XXXII. 26, to the end.

The song proceeds with threatenings of punishment for their impiety, but with intimations of mercy; Moses advises the people to set their hearts to all the words of this law; and he is sent up to mount Nebo to see the promised land, and die.

26 I SAID, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men; *God could easily, and might justly, have done this:* 27 Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, [and] lest they should say, Our hand [is] high, and the LORD hath not done all this, *lest their enemies should ascribe all the praise to their idols, and attribute nothing to the Most High:* 28 For they [are] a nation void of counsel, neither [is there any] understanding in them; *they are a foolish nation, who go on in a course that will end in their ruin.* 29 O that they were wise, [that] they understood this, [that] they would consider their latter end! *Moses feared the worst, yet earnestly wishes their reformation; that they would seriously consider where*

their iniquities would lead them. 30 How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up? *He declares they might easily have escaped those calamities, if God had not been provoked to forsake them; formerly, with a few they destroyed vast armies; but now, a few enemies should conquer them; for the Lord had shut them up, so that they could not escape.* 31 For their rock [is] not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves [being] judges; *they should often be brought to confess that their gods were not like Jehovah.* For their vine [is] of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes [are] grapes of gall, their clusters [are] bitter: 33 Their wine [is] the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. *Israel had been planted and cultivated like a vine, and good fruit was expected; but instead of this, their fruits and actions, like Sodom of old, were hateful to God and deadly to themselves. Some understand this of the enemies of Israel, and then the next verse foretells their destruction.* 34 [Is] not this laid up in store with me, [and] sealed up among my treasures? *though I seem to forget it, yet I have a fixed time to execute my purpose.* 35 To me [belongeth] vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in [due] time: for the day of their calamity [is] at hand; and the things that shall come upon them make haste; *though they may think themselves secure, yet at an hour when they think not I will bring sudden destruction upon them.* 36 For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; *here mercy begins to dawn, and the day of deliverance shall arise,* when he seeth that [their] power is gone, and [there is] none shut up, or left, *that they have no hope of deliverance, but begin to despair that no garrisons or fenced cities are left them, when all seem to be quite destroyed, and none able to do any thing towards their help.* 37 And he shall say, *that is, he will teach his people to say to the heathen,* Where [are] their gods, [their] rock in whom they trusted, 38 Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, [and] drank the wine of their drink offerings? *that is, to whom ye offered the fat of your sacrifices, and on the fumes of which they supposed their deities feasted.* Let them rise up and help you, [and] be your protection; *they should cry to those gods, but all in vain; from hence they were to learn that God only could help and deliver them.* 39 See now that I, [even] I, [am] he, and [there is] no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither [is there any] that can deliver out of my hand. 40 For I lift up my hand to heaven, and

say, I live for ever, *as sure as I live for ever I will deliver my people, and fully avenge myself on all my enemies.* 41 If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me: *whetting his glittering or flaming sword, imports deliberation, and a steady purpose to make terrible destruction.* 42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh: [and that] with the blood of the slain and of the captives, *of those slain in the field, and of those who being wounded only are taken captives,* from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy, *from the time that I begin to take vengeance, or rather, as some better render it, from the head to the slave of the enemy, from the king to the meanest of the people.* 43 Rejoice, O ye nations, [with] his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, [and] to his people*. *The former part of the song expresses great enmity between the Jews and Gentiles; but here Moses exults in the prospect of their becoming one people.*

44 And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea, *or Joshua,* the son of Nun. 45 And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel: 46 And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. 47 For it [is] not a vain thing for you; because it [is] your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong [your] days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it. *Here Moses gives them a solemn charge to regard what he had been saying, and to teach them to their children, as the way to obtain long life here, and eternal life hereafter.* Luke x. 28.

48 And the LORD spake unto Moses that self-same day, *he renewed the order given him in* chap. xxvii. 12., saying, 49 Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, [unto] mount Nebo, which [is] in the land of Moab, that [is] over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: 50 And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in

* Before this verse the LXX insert these words, *Rejoice, ye heavens, together with him, and let all the angels of God worship him.* The latter clause is exactly the words which the apostle quotes in Heb. i. 6.; and, if they are in the original, they are a prediction of the exaltation of Christ, as what comes after is a plain prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles, and is so applied by St. Paul. This yet remains to be fulfilled, with many other parallel passages in the Revelations.

mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: 51 Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. 52 Yet thou shalt see the land before [thee;] but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel; *God reminds him of his sin, that he might submit to the appointment more cheerfully; he tells him of Aaron, who was gone before, and was a pattern of patient resignation, and promises him a sight of the good land; this was designed as a favour, and a token that he was reconciled.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. It is much to be wished, that all men *would consider their latter end,* and reflect upon the consequences of their actions. It is a sign of wisdom, and the way to increase it. Especially let us look forward to the end of life, and what will await us then. While men banish the thoughts of futurity, and *live like the beasts that perish,* without understanding and reflection, it is no wonder there is so much wickedness in the world. The miseries of mankind are owing to want of consideration. Lam. i. 9., *Jerusalem remembered not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no comforter.* Let us look forward and consider what lies before us; that like prudent men, foreseeing the evil, we may hide ourselves.

2. Though wicked men may at present prosper, and flourish like the green bay-tree, yet judgments are kept in store for them. Their wickedness is laid up for them, and it will not be lost or forgotten. Though punishment may be delayed, and the sentence may not be speedily executed, a day of reckoning will come, when the treasure will be unsealed, and God will execute vengeance on his enemies. This is true of christians who apostatize from the gospel, or who abuse it. *For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. The Lord shall judge his people,* Heb. x. 30. Let us, therefore, be afraid of God's judgments; *for,* as the apostle infers from this very consideration, *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

3. The great importance of religion, should recommend it to the serious regards of all mankind; *it is not a vain thing,* or a light matter, or a thing of indifference, that may be attended to,

or neglected; but our life is at stake. It is the only way to secure peace and happiness in the present life, and to obtain eternal felicity. This is not one of those trifles, which if a man pursue he is not the better, or if he neglect, he is not the worse; it is a matter of infinite moment. Oh that men were sensible of this; that they would *set their hearts to keep God's commandments;* that they would make religion their chief business, and set about it with seriousness, affection, and resolution! May we then *fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.

In this chapter we have a very sublime description of the majesty of God; the blessings of the twelve tribes; and the excellency of Israel; being the last words of Moses, who dies, like his ancestors, expressing his good wishes for Israel, and leaving behind him a prophetical blessing, which should in due time be fulfilled. The dying words of great and eminent men, often make a deep impression; these were probably left in writing.

1 AND this [is] the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death, *which was a prophecy of what should befall them hereafter.* 2 And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran*, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand [went] a fiery law for them. *In this verse he celebrates the goodness of God in giving them the law from Sinai.* 3 Yea, he loved the people; all his saints [are] in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; [every one] shall receive of thy words. *The giving of the law, though attended with terror, was a token of his special love to them. They were in his hand, or under his providence and protection; and, during their abode at Sinai, they sat at his feet to receive his words, like scholars at their master's feet. They are then reminded by whose hand it was given; and the Jews say, this was the first thing they were to teach their children.* 4 Moses commanded us a law, [even] the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob; *Moses commanded us to receive this law, which God hath given, and which was the best inheritance to them and their children.* 5 And he was king in Jeshurun, when

* Seir and Paran were two neighbouring hills that were enlightened with the glory of God, which shone on Sinai; from hence, amidst an host of angels, he delivered the law with his right hand to Moses out of the midst of the fire.

the heads of the people [and] the tribes of Israel were gathered together. *Moses was, under God, their supreme ruler and governor. He then proceeds to bless each particular tribe.*

6 Let Reuben live, and not die; and let [not] his men be few*.

7 And this [is the blessing] of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, *that is, hear their prayers: it intimates that much of a devotional spirit should remain among them, and that their prayers should be answered:* and bring him unto his people, *that is, after the captivity, which was accomplished:* let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help [to him] from his enemies, *that is, avenge him of his enemies, and let his own strength be sufficient without the aid of his brethren. Accordingly this was the most valiant and successful tribe, and continued longest. Nothing is said of Simeon, because he was included in the lot of Judah,* Joshua xix. 1., *they went together in their expeditions.*

8 And of Levi he said, [Let] thy Thummim and thy Urim [be] with thy holy one, *let the breastplate of judgment, which was the Urim and Thummim, let light and uprightness be with Aaron and his seed,* whom thou didst prove at Massah, [and with] whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah, *whom thou didst severely try and awfully reprove, and shut out of Canaan;* 9 Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant, *in the execution of thy judgments concerning the golden calf, they showed no respect of persons, and adhered to God when none else did so; therefore,* 10 They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar, *they shall be continued in this honourable employment, shall teach thy law, and offer sacrifices.* 11 Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again; *they will have many enemies, perhaps more because of their being God's ministers, but thou wilt bless and prosper them.*

12 [And] of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by, *or before,* him; [and the LORD] shall cover him all the day long; *the tribe of Benjamin, who is beloved of God, as Benjamin was of his father, shall have his lot near the temple of*

* The last *not* should be left out; though his men be few, it should still exist as a tribe, though not be so numerous as some others.

God, who will protect him from evil; and he shall dwell between his shoulders, *that is, God's temple, wherein he dwelt; shall be built on mount Moriah, which was in that tribe.*

13 And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD [be] his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, *his shall be a fruitful country, enriched with dews, and showers, and springs of water;* 14 And for the precious fruits [brought forth] by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, *or, as in the margin, by the moons, that is, fruits shall be brought forth successively in their several months.* 15 And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, *their hills shall bring forth vines, and olives, and figs without, and within shall be full of rich metals.* 16 And for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and [for] the good will of him that dwelt in the bush; *this was the crown of all, the Shekinah that appeared to Moses, the good will and favour of God, the fountain of all blessings, and who alone can give a relish to all:* let [the blessing] come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren, *let blessings come in a large, plentiful, conspicuous manner, and crown the head of him that was separated from his brethren, but separated to honour and glory in Egypt.* 17 His glory [is like] the firstling of his bullock, and his horns [are like] the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth, *he shall enjoy kingly authority, have power and strength to push and destroy his enemies to the ends of the earth, or the land:* and they [are] the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they [are] the thousands of Manasseh, *though the men of Manasseh are now more than the men of Ephraim, yet in process of time Ephraim shall exceed Manasseh, according to Jacob's prophecy,* Gen. xlviii. 19.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE have great reason to be thankful that God hath given us his law. Moses leads Israel to celebrate this, as a token of his special kindness. A goodly land was their inheritance, but the divine revelation was the best possession for them and theirs: we can leave posterity nothing better than our bibles. Let us bless God for them, and maintain a grateful sense of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to teach us, as Israel here did

for Moses. This glorious light of the gospel is the greatest blessing our land can boast of. We have, in this respect, all reason to say, *The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places*, surely, *we have a goodly heritage.*

2. The favour and good will of God, is the best blessing we can ask for our friends. Moses prayed for many blessings upon Joseph, but this was the last and the chief; it is the source of all blessings; it sweetens all others, and secures the soul from evil. At the bush God renewed his covenant; let us recommend our children, servants, friends, and acquaintance, to the good will of God, as our covenant God; and instead of being solicitous for a blessing out of the corn-floor or wine-press, or from worldly prosperity, let us pray, that his good will may be with them, for time and eternity.

CHAP. XXXIII. 18, to the end.

A continuation of the blessings of the twelve tribes, and the excellency of Israel.

18 AND of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents. *These two were born of the same mother, and their posterity were neighbours. Zebulun shall have cause to rejoice in his success in trade at home and abroad, and Issachar in his tents, in the country employments of tillage, and feeding cattle.* 19 They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck [of] the abundance of the seas, and [of] treasures hid in the sand; *though they had different employments, yet both should be serviceable to promote the interest of God and religion. They should have great success at sea, and great treasures on the land; and should give cheerfully to support God's worship; inviting strangers to his temple, by their commerce, and their exhortations; and offering sacrifices of righteousness there.*

20 And of Gad he said, Blessed [be] he that enlargeth Gad, *that is, blessed be God, who bestows so large a portion upon him:* he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head, *he dwells amidst all his enemies fearless as a lion, and tears to pieces their arm and their head, their armies and princes.* 21 And he provided the first part for himself, because there, [in] a portion of the lawgiver, [was he] seated, *he first moved to be settled on the*

other side Jordan, and Moses, by God's permission, allowed him to do so; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD, and his judgments with Israel, *he came forth to war with the princes and captains, to execute God's judgments on the Canaanites. Moses speaks of this as already done, from an assurance that they would do so.*

22 And of Dan he said, Dan [is] a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan, *he is strong and valiant, shall surprise his enemies as a lion leaps on his prey from Bashan, a place that was noted for them.* See Judges xiv. 5.

23 And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD; possess thou the west and the south, *a rich, fruitful country, where Christ resided much.*

24 And of Asher he said, [Let] Asher [be] blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil; *thou shalt have a numerous issue, be of a kind, affable temper, and have a country so abounding in olives, that thou shalt wash thy feet in oil.* 25 Thy shoes [shall be] iron and brass, *or, under thy shoes shall be iron and brass;* and as thy days, [so shall] thy strength [be,] *thy country shall abound in rich mines of iron and brass, and thou shalt grow stronger and stronger all thy days, thine age shall be as thy youth.*

He then concludes the whole with a general account of their happiness, as the people of God; 26 [There is] none *of the gods* like unto the God of Jeshurun, [who] rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky; *he appears for the help of his people in the highest magnificence and glory, in the heavens and on the earth, and with infinite power.* 27 The eternal God [is thy] refuge, and underneath [are] the everlasting arms; *he is the eternal and unchangeable God, in him they may always find safety and comfort, and always will do so, if they commit themselves to him:* and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy [them,] *he shall give thee power to thrust out the Canaanites, and a commission to destroy them.* 28 Israel then shall dwell in safety alone, *separated from other people, without alliance with them, or dependance upon them:* the fountain of Jacob [shall be] upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew; *the posterity of Jacob, who flowed from him as water from a fountain, should dwell in a fruitful country, enriched with the dews and showers of heaven.* 29 Happy [art] thou, O Israel: *being unable to express their happiness, he breaks out into admiration of it;* who [is] like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy

help, and who [is] the sword of thy excellency! *a shield to defend thee, a sword to destroy thine enemies:* and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places, *they shall submit, and pretend friendship through fear; and thou shalt destroy their idol temples and all their strong holds. Thus ended the song, and all that Moses spoke or wrote.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let us learn from the various particulars of these blessings, to acknowledge the agency and wisdom of God in the different circumstances of states and kingdoms; in their various products, as well as the different temper of the inhabitants. Some are settled in a fruitful soil; others have rich mines, which generally are most barren above; some, like Zebulun, are merchants at sea, and are exposed to perils by water, that they may bring abundance from abroad. Others dwell on the land, they live at home, and are engaged in some honourable and useful employment. The different genius and inclinations of men must be ascribed to God, as well as their pursuits and different occupations. Let us acknowledge God in this, *who fixes the bounds of our habitation;* and glorify him with our substance, be it of whatever kind it will. *Let our merchandise and our hire be holiness to the Lord.* Let us learn from the whole,—

2. That *blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.* In what lofty strains does Moses describe the happiness of Israel, because they were near God; God is not ours as he was theirs; but we enter into the best of their privileges. *God is our father in Christ Jesus;* he *blesses us with spiritual blessings;* he is our support and defence. All the fruitfulness and security of our country is owing to him; that we dwell safely and peaceably, is all to be ascribed to God. But our spiritual blessings render us truly happy, if we know how to improve them. Remember, Israel lost their good land, and all their blessings, by disobedience. Let us, therefore, carefully attend to the apostle's caution, *Be not high-minded, but fear.*

CHAPTER XXXIV.

This chapter gives an account of the death, burial and age of Moses, and several other particulars. It is uncertain by whom it was written; some say by Joshua; but Dan was not called by that name, till after his time. It is more probable that it was added by Samuel, or some other of the sacred writers.

1 AND Moses went up from the plains of Moab, *where Israel was encamped,* unto the mountain of Nebo, *the highest hill of that ridge of mountains called Abarim,* to the top of Pisgah, that [is] over against Jericho, *to Pisgah, which was the point or summit of that hill.* And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, *by a miraculous power strengthening his sight, or making a clear representation of all those parts to his view,* 2 And all Naphtali, *to the north,* and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, *in the middle of the country,* and all the land of Judah, *that lay south-west,* unto the utmost sea, *or the Mediterranean,* 3 And the south, *the wilderness that lay south of Judea,* and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar, *called so, because of many fragrant trees and shrubs that grew about it: the whole country was about one hundred and fifty miles long, and near seventy miles over in most places. God, no doubt, gave him such a view and description of the country, as illustrated and confirmed the prophetic blessing he had given.* 4 And the LORD said unto him, This [is] the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see [it] with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. 5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD, *as the Lord had foretold and determined he should, because of his transgression.* 6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over-against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. *God, by the ministration of his Son, or his angels, buried him in some place that Israel knew not, to prevent their superstition and idolatry in paying any undue regard to his remains,* Jude 9. 7 And Moses [was] an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated; *his imagination and natural powers were as strong as ever, and the splendour of his countenance continued to the last.* 8 And the children of Israel wept

for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping [and] mourning for Moses were ended, *that is, they mourned for him thirty days, which was the usual time for all persons of eminence.* 9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses. *Moses had nominated him before his death, and God had qualified him for the supreme government of Israel, by a spirit of wisdom, courage, and resolution; and the people hearkened to him as they had done to Moses. Then follows the character of Moses.* 10 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, *that is, conversed familiarly with him, without dreams or visions;* 11 In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land; *that is, there was none like him in miraculous works,* 12 And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel, *doing all his great and terrible works openly, not in a corner. Thus endeth the Pentateuch, containing the history of two thousand five hundred and fifty-two years and a half, (according to the best chronologers) from the creation of the world, to the death of Moses.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. GOOD men, after the example of Moses, should be willing to die when God pleases. Moses was healthy and vigorous, capable of many services; and Israel needed him: though he died in his full strength, he died cheerfully. There was no more between God and Moses than *Go up and die:* as a father commands his obedient children to retire to rest. Good men that have walked with God here, and by faith have seen the good land before them, the happiness of heaven, may cheerfully die. God will be with them, receive their immortal spirits, and take care of their sleeping dust, as he did of the body of Moses. Let us be willing then to quit our most pleasing prospects in this world, and forego those services we might do, to *depart in peace,* and see *God's great salvation.*

2. The removal of wise and good men, especially of governors and ministers, in the vigour of their days, should be seriously lamented; Moses was both to Israel. Considering how gently

and tenderly he had led them; how often he had saved them by his intercession, and led them like a father, it is no wonder he was bewailed, and that by some, who were perhaps rebellious before. Considering what a loss the world and church sustain by the removal of such men, their death should be lamented. The greater regard we have for the honour of God, and the interest of religion, the more concerned we shall be when useful and good men are taken away.

3. It is a great comfort, when faithful ministers are removed, that others succeed them. Though *the prophets do not live for ever,* the word of God does, and there will always be a succession of faithful men to dispense it. Joshua, who came in Moses' stead, had much of his spirit; and was happy in that he had the favour of God, and the affections of the people. It is a great mercy that God raises up faithful pastors, and that his people are not as sheep without a shepherd. Let us rejoice in this, and continually pray that God *would send more faithful labourers into his harvest.*

4. Let us learn from the whole history of Moses, and especially from his death, how great our happiness is in having Christ for our prince and commander. Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ as a Son. Moses was familiar with God, but Christ was more so; he was in his bosom, intimately acquainted with him and his will. He did superior miracles, signs, and wonders; his character was more perfect; he introduced a better revelation; *he was without blemish, and without spot.* Moses died, and was buried, and saw corruption; but Christ did not: *God would not suffer his holy One to see corruption.* He lives again, and lives for ever. *He is a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* He has no successor, as Moses had, for his dominion shall continue till the consummation of all things. *He is for ever sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.* He will bring all his faithful people to the heavenly Canaan, and complete all the divine purposes of love and grace to them. Let us rejoice, then, in Christ Jesus; be thankful for *this unspeakable gift;* and consider ourselves as under the highest obligations to be obedient to all his requisitions, and wait for his salvation. *Amen.*

THE BOOK OF

JOSHUA.

INTRODUCTION.

THE former Books give an account of the gathering the Israelites as a people, their charters, laws and institutes. This sacred Book is properly a history of the Jewish nation; it is a book worthy our highest regard, as it is very ancient, and undoubtedly authentic. It is called the *Book of Joshua*, because it contains an history of his acts, government, conquests, dividing the land, and settling the state of Israel; the greatest part of which might be written by himself, though additions have been made by some succeeding writer. It contains the history of somewhat more than seventeen years.

CHAPTER I.

In this chapter we have a fresh commission and encouragement given to Joshua, and directions for his own personal conduct. He begins to execute his orders, and the people profess their allegiance and readiness to comply with them.

1 NOW after the death of Moses, the servant of the LORD, *when the days of mourning for him were ended, during which they had time to reflect on their conduct to him,* it came to pass, that the LORD spake *out of the sanctuary* unto Joshua the son of Nun, *who was* Moses' minister, *and had continually attended upon him for twenty years together, and knew his method of government,* saying, 2 Moses my *faithful* servant is dead; now therefore arise, *be not cast down or discouraged, but exert thyself with vigour, and* go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *am now about to give them possession of,* [even] to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that

have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. *Now the extent of country which God gave them was* 4 From the wilderness *south,* and this Lebanon *north,* even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, *which lay north-east,* all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea, *the Mediterranean, in the west,* toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. *They were now in the east part; they never had the possession of all this country, but in David's and Solomon's time they were all tributary to them.* 5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, [so] I will be with thee: I will not fail thee nor forsake thee, *though their enemies exceeded them in power and strength, they should all fall, and success and prosperity attend him through all his life.* 6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. *This is often repeated, for Joshua had great discouragements. Jordan was to be crossed, the enemy was before and behind, they were bold men, united in alliance to oppose him; lived in strong cities; his own army was a mutinous, discontented people, clogged with old persons, women, and children, baggage and cattle; and Moses was gone; all this sunk his spirits. But God says,* 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it [to] the right hand, or [to] the left *on any occasion, under any pretence whatever,* that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but *thou shalt speak, and judge, and act according to it; and in order to this* thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all [that is] written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? *I, whom thou art obliged to obey, who have carried thee through so many difficulties, of whose power and goodness thou hast had such large experience?* Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God [is] with thee, whithersoever thou goest, *who is all-sufficient to preserve thee in all dangers and difficulties, and prosper thee in all thy enterprises. Upon this, Joshua applied himself to the business, and ordered the people to prepare for their march.*

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Pre-

pare you victuals, *all provisions necessary for such an expedition, which they might furnish themselves with in the land of the Amorites, where they now were;* for within three days *after the return of the spies,* (*ch.* ii. 1. iii. 2.), ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it. 12 And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, *their elders and princes, who were to communicate it to the rest,* spake Joshua, saying, 13 Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, *the agreement between him and you,* (Num. xxxii. 20.) saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, *be ready to assist them upon all occasions,* all the mighty men of valour, *or so many as are needful,* and help them; 15 Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as [he hath given] you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses, the LORD's servant, gave you on this side Jordan toward the sun-rising. *To this they cheerfully consented; and accordingly forty thousand went with their brethren, and the rest staid to guard their own settlements.*

16 And they answered Joshua, *not only the two tribes and an half, but all the elders and officers of Israel,* saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go. 17 According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee; *we acknowledge thee as our chief magistrate, and promise allegiance and cheerful obedience:* only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses; *this is our united wish and prayer.* 18 Whosoever [he be] that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death, *we will stand by thee to maintain thy authority, and bind ourselves to obey thy orders upon pain of death:* only be strong and of a good courage, *and nothing shall be wanting on our part to approve ourselves worthy of such a leader.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. It is a great blessing to a kingdom or church, to have a succession of useful and upright judges and ministers. Joshua comes in the place of Moses, much to the satisfaction and advantage of the Israelites; especially considering their present critical situation. Thus it is in the course of things in the world and church; one generation of magistrates and ministers passeth away, and another cometh. The agency of Providence is to be seen therein, and the care and goodness of God to be acknowledged for it.

2. The presence of God with us is our great support and encouragement, amidst the labours and difficulties of life. We are risen up in our fathers' places, though we may not be equal to them in wisdom and zeal; but God is the same. All their gifts were derived from him; to him they owed all their success; his power and grace are the same; and that grace, if we seek it, will be sufficient for us. Let not the rising generation be discouraged, but humbly wait on God, and adopt the prayer of Solomon; *the Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: that he may incline our hearts to walk in all his ways.*

3. Let good men learn to cast all their cares upon God, and practise moderation and contentment. The apostle teaches us this lesson, *Heb.* xiii. 5., and quotes the promise of Joshua as the ground of it. Be not anxiously solicitous about future events; to heap up wealth, or to guard against evil. We have the promise of an ever-faithful God to trust to; *I will never leave you, I will never forsake you.* And whatever dangers or enemies are in the way, we may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper.*

4. How important soever the affairs which we have in hand may be, let us never forget God's law, and the obedience we owe it. *v.* 7. 8. *Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt*

make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. The weight of cares which devolved upon Joshua, required the greatest attention, and yet he read, studied, and kept the law of God. As no dignity or dominion should set a man above subjection to the divine law; so no plea of hurry in business, however important, will excuse for the neglect of religion, and the care of our own souls. Let us then keep our eye fixed upon God's commandments, and remember how his authority, independence, power, and goodness, strengthen each of them. This is the way to inspire us with true courage; this is the way to have all desirable success and prosperity to attend our endeavours. Difficult things will become easy; the hardest work agreeable, and success will be sure, if we take God along with us. Let religion be our great business, for that *is the whole of man.*

5. It is extremely happy for nations, when there is a cordial friendship and union between governors and subjects, and when religion is the bond of that union. How glorious does Israel appear with such a leader as Joshua, and with such sentiments and resolutions in their hearts! It is happy when magistrates exercise their authority impartially yet gently, resolutely yet mildly; and when they rule in the fear of God. How happy that people who consider their governors as ministers of God, and thus pay obedience to their reasonable and just commands! When their inclination is to provoke one another to zeal and courage! May this be more and more the character of this nation; that it may be said of us, as it was of Israel, *Happy art thou,* O Britain! *who is like unto thee?* a nation highly favoured of the Lord!

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter we have an account of Rahab's receiving and concealing the two spies sent from Shittim; the covenant between her and them; and of their return, and report to Joshua.

1 AND Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim, *that is, from the plains of Moab, where they were now encamped,* two men, to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho, *which was the nearest city, about seven miles distant; learn its strength, and how*

it is best to attack it; but let none of the people know, lest they should murmur and get a false report. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there*. 2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to-night of the children of Israel to search out the country; *the city was soon alarmed, for they judged from their habit, language, or aspect, that they were Israelites and spies.* 3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country, *and surprise the city.* 4 And the woman *discovered who these persons were, and their errand, and she* took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they [where:] 5 And it came to pass [about the time] of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them *before they get to the river Jordan. This part of her conduct was very blameable, she told an absolute falsehood, and neither God nor man could praise her for this. It might be partly owing to her fears, and partly to her ignorance of the nature of truth and religion, which God mercifully pardoned, and accepted her faith.* 6 But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, *which was flat, like the leads of our churches, as is now common in the East,* and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof *to dry.* 7 And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate, *to guard the city against surprise, and secure the spies if they were not gone out.*

8 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; 9 And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land†, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of

* Rahab lived on the wall of the city, which was convenient for them to make observations from; to lie concealed, or to make their escape. She is called here, and in the New Testament, *an harlot;* but the word properly signifies an *hostess,* or *innkeeper.* So the Chaldee paraphrase renders it. She might have been an harlot, but was now reclaimed from it; for her discourse with the spies savours of religion, and the fear of God.

† Some think that God had made known to the king and people of Jericho, that they must quit their land, though the circumstance is not mentioned, and that the people would not take the warning; but Rahab believed it; and that this appears to be the nature of that faith which she manifested, and for which she is commended in *Heb.* xi. 31., and *James* ii. 25. The apostle says, *She perished not with those that believed not;* or, as in the *Heb., who were not obedient;* but how could they be said to be disobedient, if God's will was not made known to them?

you, *this was what the spies came to inquire about.* 10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt, *above forty years ago,* and *it is still talked of,* what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that [were] on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed, *these are fresh in our memories.* 11 And as soon as we had heard [these things,] our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you, *this Moses had foretold;* for the LORD your God, he [is] God in heaven above, and in earth beneath, *he can do whatsoever he pleases in heaven and in earth.* 12 Now, therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD*, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token, *a sure sign to secure us when you take the city, and that you will be as good as your words:* 13 And [that] ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, *their children,* (ch. vi. 23.), and deliver our lives from death. 14 And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business, *if ye tell not the errand on which we came.* And it shall be when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. 15 Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house [was] upon the town-wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. 16 And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, *which is near the city, and in which there are many caves,* lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way. 17 And the men said unto her, We [will be] blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear, *we would willingly observe most exactly what we promise and swear, and therefore, that there may be no mistake on either part, we repeat the terms again;* 18 Behold, [when] we come into the land *and are drawing near to your city,* thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. 19 And it shall be, [that] whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood [shall be] upon his head, and we [will be] guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood [shall be] on our head, if [any] hand be upon him. 20 And if thou utter this our business, then we

* This shewed her faith to be strong in Jehovah, by whom she asks them to swear, and also in his promise to give them the land.

will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear*. 21 And she said, According unto your words, so [be] it, *I willingly submit to all these terms.* And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window *before they left her.* 22 And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought [them] throughout all the way, but found [them] not.

23 So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all [things] that befell them: 24 And, *expressing themselves like bold and faithful men,* they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land, *as sure as if we already possessed it,* for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us, *and therefore we have nothing to fear. These were good tidings to Joshua, which he probably told to all the people, to encourage and animate them.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE learn hence, that the faith of Rahab should be imitated by us. She believed the promise, and obeyed the command, of the God of Israel. She ventured her life, and all that was dear to her, upon his declaration. This was surprising in a person so young, (for she was the mother of Boaz thirty years after this), especially in a person of her profession and character, if that was indeed criminal. She renounced idolatry, and acknowledged the true God, and the law of Moses. This is the more remarkable, considering that the prince, and the other inhabitants of the city, who had heard these things as well as she, were not so affected by them, and paid no regard to them. There was not so great faith in Israel. They knew the land was promised to their fathers, and had seen the great things God had done for them, *yet staggered through unbelief.* But this woman was confident of it; she speaks to the spies, notwithstanding their seemingly destitute condition, as if they had actually taken the city, and the whole land was at their disposal. Therefore she is recommended

* These were the three conditions, to bind the scarlet thread in the window, to have all her relations in her own house, and not to tell the business on which they came, or the agreement they had made, lest others should hang out a scarlet thread, or cord, likewise.

to our imitation by the apostle Paul. She not only assented to this truth, that *Jehovah was God in heaven above, and in earth beneath*, but acted accordingly; and by works proved the sincerity of her faith. *She was justified*, as James says, *by her works:* and he adds, that *as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* Let us imitate her example in this respect; and as we profess to believe in God, so *let us be careful to maintain good works.*

2. There may be a mixture of imperfection in the best characters, which should be a caution and a warning to us. Neither Paul nor James commend her for lying. It is strange that any commentators should attempt to vindicate it, saying, 'If the officers would be deceived, let them be deceived: and as they were Canaanites, truth was not their due.' But this is a strange way of arguing in christian divines; and such as some heathen philosophers would have blushed at. Good ends will never justify bad means; we may do any thing but sin, to promote a good end. Those which are called officious lies, that will, if told, produce more good than harm, however they may have been vindicated, are certainly very bad things, and ought carefully to be avoided; for nothing is lawful for one, which is not so for others in like circumstances: and if this maxim once comes to be held good, all mutual trust and confidence will be at an end. Nay, even those divines who have endeavoured to vindicate Rahab's conduct, have still asserted, not with great consistency indeed, that it is our duty to *put away lying far from us, and every one to speak truth to his neighbour*, and never to *do evil that good may come.* But these are the declarations of the bible, and, as such, may be set against all artful equivocations and sophistical arguments whatever. We learn,

3. That in all our covenant engagements, we should be as plain and express with one another as possible. The spies, though in haste, and undoubtedly in great confusion, were very exact in first settling the terms with Rahab, repeating the agreement, that they might respectively remember what was promised. They explained every condition, to prevent the possibility of equivocation. Let us be cautious in all our engagements, that we may not be perplexed and confounded afterwards. It becomes us especially to be cautious in all our transactions with God; that we count the cost, examine what is required of us, and *not be rash to utter any thing before God*, by way of vow or engagement. Let integrity and prudence direct and preserve us in all our engage-

ments with God and man; for *the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his countenance beholdeth the upright.*

CHAPTER III.

The people prepare to pass over Jordan; God encourages and directs Joshua, and Joshua the people, by telling them the waters should be cut off; which was done according to his word.

1 AND Joshua rose early in the morning *after the return of the spies, and their report was made known to the people;* and they removed from Shittim, *where they had been encamped about a month,* and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over, *that, observing the width of the river, the miracle might appear more remarkable.* 2 And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host, *a second time, with more particular directions;* 3 And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it*. 4 Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure, *that is, about a thousand yards, rather more than half a mile:* come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed [this] way heretofore. *They must keep at a distance from the ark, out of reverence to it, and that all might see it the better, as they were to follow it through an untrodden path.*

5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves, *keep yourselves from all moral and legal pollutions, and bring your hearts to an holy and reverent temper,* for to-morrow the LORD will do wonders among you. 6 And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And *the priests showed strong faith in God, and ready obedience to Joshua, and* they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

7 And the LORD said unto Joshua, *probably from the mercy-seat, just before the ark began to remove,* This day will I begin to

* The Levites used to carry the ark, but the priests did it on some extraordinary occasions, as at this time, and chap. vi. 6. It used to be carried in the midst of the camp, but now went before it, the pillar of cloud being probably removed.

magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, [so] I will be with thee; *as Moses was magnified in the sight of Israel, by dividing the Red sea, so shalt thou be magnified by dividing Jordan.* 8 And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan, *in the first entrance into the river, where they stood for a season, till the river was divided, and then they went into the midst of it, as is implied,* ver. 17. 9 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither *to the ark, or tabernacle, the place of public assemblies,* and hear the words of the LORD your God, *and what he is about to do.* 10 And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God [is] among you, *you shall have sensible evidence that he is the living God, and not a dead idol, such as the heathen worship;* and [that] he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites, *and thus fulfil the promises made to Abraham.* 11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. 12 Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man, *to be nearer witnesses of the miracle.* 13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the LORD of all the earth, *who can dispose of the whole land, and manage the waters and rivers of it as he pleaseth,* shall rest in the waters of Jordan, [that] the waters of Jordan shall be cut off [from] the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap, *being as it were congealed, as the Red sea was,* Exod. xv. 8., *and so kept from overflowing the whole country.*

14 And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; 15 And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest, *that is, the barley harvest, which was in the first month, about the passover**,) 16 That the waters which came down from above, stood [and] rose up upon

* At this time the river was wider and deeper, owing to the melting of the snows on mount Lebanon, at the foot of which was the head of Jordan; by this means the river overflowed its banks, so that the priests' feet could easily touch the waters, which they could not have done had the water been within its channel. Observe here the goodness of God in bringing them into Canaan when it was furnished with all necessary provisions.

an heap very far from the city Adam, that [is] beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, [even] the salt sea, failed, [and] were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho *. 17 And the priests that bare the ark of t e covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, *not at all fearing that the mountains of water should fall down upon them*, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan †.

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us be willing to follow God wherever he leads us; Israel was to follow the ark, though they did not know what God would do. We have no ark to guide us; but we have the providence, the word and the Spirit of God. We should submit to the divine word, though called to go through untrodden paths, or difficulties untried and unknown before. We have the presence of God with us, as really as if we had the ark; and *our strength will be equal to our day*. We need not fear the greatest dangers, for we have God's promise to encourage us; *when thou passest through the fire and the water, fear not, I am with thee, be not dismayed, I am thy God.*

2. Let us learn to sanctify ourselves whenever God is to manifest himself to us, or we are to appear before him. God doeth wonders. Let us prepare ourselves to regard them, when we attend on divine ordinances, behold God's glory in the tabernacle, or see his wonders in his house, and at his table. Let us sanctify ourselves, that is, *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*. If sanctification was required of those who were only to behold God's wonderful works, how much more is required of those who are to act in his service, and attend his worship. Let us learn to divest ourselves of all cares, especially of all pollutions; then we shall behold God's wonderful works with a proper temper, and attend without distraction.

3. We see great reason to adore the power and goodness of God in this surprising miracle. When we read this story, we are ready to say with the Psalmist, when Jordan was driven back,

* Probably keeping about one thousand yards from the ark which stood in the midst. It is strange the inhabitants of Jericho did not attempt to oppose their passage, but this was owing to the same Providence that divided the waters.

† In John i. 28. the place is called *Bethabara*, the house of passage, probably in memory of this event.

What aileth thee, O Jordan, that thou wast driven back? But remember, it was *at the presence of the Lord.* Psalm cxiv. 5, 7. Or with Habakkuk, *ch.* iii. 8., *Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers?* No; *thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people.* How observant are all creatures of God's commands! One word of his stopped the course of Jordan, and turned the water into a rock. How glorious a God do we serve, whom all the elements obey! He could have made their path a crystal pavement; but that would not have been so remarkable, nor so magnificent. Frost sometimes does that, but he makes a liquid wall, which was more wonderful. What cannot the Almighty do to save his people! In allusion to this, let not sincere christians, the true Israel of God, be afraid of death; which, like Jordan, is between them and the heavenly Canaan; since God can make them a safe, easy, and wonderful passage through it, and bring them to the land of plenty and happiness.

CHAPTER IV.

In this chapter we have a further account of the Israelites' miraculous passage over Jordan; the manner in which they marched through it; the return of the waters when the ark was come out; and the setting up of the stones in Gilgal.

1 AND it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, *repeated the command given,* ch. iii. 12., *with enlargements,* saying, 2 Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, 3 And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, *every man one as large as he can carry,* and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging-place where you shall lodge this night, *to transmit the memory of this great event to posterity, and to be a standing proof of the truth of it.* 4 Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, *chosen before for that employment,* out of every tribe a man; 5 And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, *go back again to the place where the ark stands (which stood still in the*

river till all was done, ver. 10.), and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: 6 That this may be a sign among you, [that] when your children ask [their fathers] in time to come, *as doubtless they will, when they see such a pillar or heap of large stones, in a country where scarce any large ones are to be found,* saying, What [mean] ye by these stones? 7 Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial *and a monument of this great mercy* unto the children of Israel for ever. 8 And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. 9 And Joshua set up *other* twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood, *where they might sometimes be seen at low water:* and they are there unto this day.

10 For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua, *that is, to obey God in all his commands;* and the people hasted and passed over, *apprehending great danger while they were in their passage, by reason of the mountains of water that stood on each side, and seemed ready to overwhelm them.* 11 And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the LORD passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people, *whose faith, patience, and courage were very remarkable, waiting till all the people, and cattle, and baggage were safe over.* 12 And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them: 13 About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho; *about one third only of their military force, but Joshua chose so many, and left the rest to defend their settlements.* 14 On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel, *as he had done Moses at the Red sea;* and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life; *they were convinced that he acted by divine authority; considered him as a favourite of heaven, and reverenced and submitted to his*

orders. The priests, having seen every thing safe over, still stopped in the midst of Jordan waiting for further directions. 15 And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, 16 Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan. 17 Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan. 18 And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan; [and] the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as [they did] before, *a plain proof that it was not from any natural cause, but from the presence of God; and to all of this the people were eye-witnesses.* See ver. 11.

19 And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth [day] of the first month*, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho; *here they pitched their standing camp, and from thence sent out parties as there was occasion; while the rest of the army marched on further to conquer the country.* 20 And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal, *in some conspicuous place, where they might be easily seen, and where, ancient writers tell us, they were seen several hundred years after this event.* 21 And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What [mean] these stones? 22 Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. 23 For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over; *thus reminding them both of this and their former still greater deliverance, at the Red sea; and the design of all was,* 24 That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it [is] mighty, *that all nations might be convinced of his being, power, and providence, and your relation to him:* that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever, *worship and serve him alone, all your lives long, and through all generations.*

* On the fifteenth day of the first month they were sent out of Egypt; so that it was forty years within five days, according to the prediction, till they entered Canaan.

REFLECTIONS.

1. GOD's works of wonder for his church and people ought to be carefully remembered. One would not think the Israelites had any need of these memorandums to keep up the remembrance of those great events; but God foresaw that they would forget them. These stones preserved the tradition. It is of importance that we treasure up in our memory God's mighty acts for the defence of his church, by making use of some proper means, such as keeping anniversary days, &c. But let us be careful, that *while singing his praises, we do not forget his works.*

2. It is the duty of parents to acquaint their children with the works of God, and transmit the remembrance of them to posterity. Children should be very desirous to learn, and should frequently be inquiring, what is the meaning of such or such rites and services; and it would be well if parents would be ready to inform them, whether they inquire or no. They should be concerned to instruct their children in those principles and facts, that may have an evident tendency to engage them to fear the Lord, and continue faithful in his service. Let them season their hearts with true religion; and by these means be training up a generation of wise and holy men, to be a blessing to the church and world in the next age. The resolution of all christian parents should be, as in Psalm lxxviii. 4, 7., *We will not hide them from our children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.*

CHAPTER V.

In this chapter we find that the Canaanites, hearing of this wonderful event, are greatly terrified; circumcision is renewed; the passover is kept at Gilgal; the manna ceaseth; and an angel appeareth to Joshua.

1 AND it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, *that is, all which remained, for two of their kings had been already killed, and* which [were] on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which [were] by the sea, *near the Mediterranean,* heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel. *God impressed the fear and dread of them upon their minds; they lost all their courage, and could think of no means of safety. This was an happy event for the Israelites; it raised their courage, and gave them time for circumcision and the passover.*

2 *Accordingly* At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, *or knives of flints,* and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time; *the first time was when they came out of Egypt to Sinai, but, it had been neglected since then; it was now proper to be renewed, as it was a seal of the covenant which conveyed the promised land to them.* 3 And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins, *a place which had that name given it from this circumstance.* 4 And this [is] the cause why Joshua did circumcise: all the people that came out of Egypt, [that were] males, *and above twenty years old, had joined in the rebellion,* [even] all the men of war, *and they* died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. 5 Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people [that were] born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, [them] they had not circumcised, *because they were uncertain of their stay in any place.* 6 For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people [that were] men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD sware that he

would not show them the land, which the LORD sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. 7 And their children, [whom] he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way, *and it was peculiarly proper to be done now, as they were going to eat the passover, which no uncircumcised person was allowed to do.* 8 And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole. *This was a further trial of their faith, as it disabled them from war in an enemy's country.* 9 And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you, *either that for which Egypt reproaches you, or rather, that for which you reproach the Egyptians, and which is also a reproach to yourselves, that ye are not a circumcised people.* Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal, *that is, rolling,* unto this day*.

10 And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. *Thus calling to remembrance their deliverance out of Egypt, and receiving by this ordinance a token of God's favour, a confirmation of his promises, and an earnest of their possessing the land.* 11 And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched [corn] in the self-same day†.

12 And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more, but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. *Thus God showed them that the manna was a miraculous supply, by its ceasing when it was no longer necessary.*

13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, *viewing the country and seeing where it was most proper to attack the city,* that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: *whether it was an angel, or Christ the Lord of angels, is not certain; he appeared as commander of an army, in a military posture;* and *notwithstanding the terror and majesty of his appearance,* Joshua

* Joshua had certainly a command from God to do this, or it would have been a most rash and imprudent thing, considering their situation, and how near Jericho was.

† They kept the feast of unleavened bread after the passover, according to divine appointment, and eat old corn, which the inhabitants had left in their barns, when they fled to the cities, and probably also ripe standing corn, both in the same day; thus coming in harvest-time they had plenty.

went unto him, *with undaunted courage*, and said unto him, [Art] thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14 And he said, Nay, *I am no mortal man, as thou thinkest; neither Israelite or Canaanite, especially not an adversary,* but [as] captain, *or prince* of the host of the LORD am I now come, *to defend and assist them.* And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? *Showing the most profound reverence, humbly desiring to receive his orders, and expressing his readiness to obey them.* 15 And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest [is] holy, *the same command as was given to Moses, (see* Exodus iii. 5.*), and showed that God was with Joshua as he was with Moses; and this was designed to fill Joshua's mind with further reverence, and submission, and to prepare him to receive the instructions that were given him in the next chapter, with a becoming temper.* And Joshua did so.

REFLECTIONS.

1. How kind and merciful are God's dealings with Israel, notwithstanding their many provocations! He put fear into their enemies to make the conquest easy, and the success sure. He renewed a rite that would be a seal of the promise of Canaan, and a pledge of its possession; *a seal of the righteousness of faith,* and those spiritual blessings which were promised to the pious descendants of Abraham. He renewed the passover, which called to remembrance their deliverance from Egypt; and both these were tokens of his continued favour. These actions in these circumstances, so contrary to the rules of human policy, and which might have exposed them to so much danger from the Canaanites, were considerable proofs of the divine authority of the Mosaical law, and of God's interposition for Israel; and were designed to raise their courage, and strengthen their faith. Yet he did not multiply miracles unnecessarily; which would have made them lose their use and benefit; and therefore he removed the manna when corn was to be had.

2. Let us rejoice in the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, as captain of the Lord's host. *He is the captain of our salvation.* All his faithful followers are the true Israel of God; he is engaged on their side; and *though a host should be encamped against them, they have no reason to fear,* for he is the commander and leader of

his people; wise, tender, powerful, and faithful. He leads on his charge against his enemies; and, through his gracious assistance, *we shall be more than conquerors.*

3. A due reverence becomes us when we draw near to God and receive messages from him. *Loose thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.* This is applicable to us. Christ makes no personal appearance as the representative of God now, but ministers are his ambassadors; and when we come to join in religious worship, and attend God's house, let us remember *it is holy ground;* and outward expressions of reverence, when we come to appear before God, are very becoming and necessary. Lifting up the hands and eyes, and especially kneeling, are recommended to us in the New Testament, by the example of Christ and his apostles. And every humble worshipper will not only engage his heart to approach God, but will show all the external marks of reverence in his worship, for *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and holiness becomes his house;* and he has expressly required that we *glorify him with body and spirit, which are his.*

CHAPTER VI.

In this chapter we have an account of the manner in which the city of Jericho was to be surrounded; the execution of the divine order, and the fulfilment of the divine promise; the deliverance of Rahab and her house; and a solemn curse denounced on the man who should attempt to rebuild the city.

1 NOW Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in*. 2 And the LORD said unto Joshua, *by the angel, the captain of his host,* See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, [and] the mighty men of valour; *perhaps the best forces of the Canaanites were collected to defend it, being a frontier town; but notwithstanding this it shall be taken, and the king and the men of valour be slain.* 3 And *this shall be the method of doing it,* ye shall compass the city, all [ye] men of war, [and] go round about the city once.

* It was a strong city, with high walls, and for this reason the inhabitants thought themselves secure.

Thus shalt thou do six days, *to exercise thy faith, obedience, and patience.* 4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets *. 5 And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long [blast] with the rams' horn, [and] when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. 6 And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, *who were to carry the ark upon this extraordinary occasion,* and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD. 7 And he said unto the people, *the men of war,* Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed, *the men of the two tribes and the half,* (ch. i. 14.), pass on before the ark of the LORD. 8 And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. 9 And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, [the priests] going on, and blowing with the trumpets, *obeying with cheerfulness and faith.* 10 And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall [any] word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout; *ye shall march with profound silence, that ye may have time to contemplate the height of the wall, and the strength of the city; and to recollect former wonders, and divine promises; and thus prepare your minds for the event.* 11 So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about [it] once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. 12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13 And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, [the priests] going on, and blowing with the trumpets. 14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days. 15 And it came to pass on the

* Not the silver trumpets, but only rams' horns, which in some countries are used by shepherds and swineherds, to this day. God chose these mean instruments, to put the greater honour upon his ark and priests, and to try the faith of his people.

seventh day, *which was probably their sabbath,* that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. 16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city. *This was done to testify their faith in God's promise,* (Heb. xi. 30.), *and joyful assurance of success; to encourage one another in the following assault, and to strike fear into their enemies.* 17 And the city shall be accursed, [even] it, and all that [are] therein, to the LORD; *a direction probably given just before they shouted, that they might know how to treat the city; it was to be accursed, that is, devoted to destruction, and consecrated to God, as being the first fruits of their victory in Canaan; they must make an example of this city, as a warning to others, to incline them either to make peace, or to quit their towns without compulsion;* only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that [are] with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent; *this both justice and gratitude required; but they were not on any account to touch the spoil:* 18 And ye in any wise keep [yourselves] from the accursed thing, lest ye make [yourselves] accursed, *liable to that curse,* when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, *liable to punishment,* and trouble it, *by exposing the whole camp to the displeasure of almighty God.* 19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, [are] consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD*. 20 So the people shouted when [the priests] blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city †.

21 And they utterly destroyed all that [was] in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword, *according to God's command,* Deut. xx. 16, 17. *Thus the people were punished for their own wickedness, God was honoured, neighbouring cities were terrified, and Israel encouraged.* 22 But Joshua had said unto the two men that spied out the

* Or, all the idols shall be utterly destroyed; the rest shall pass through the fire, as directed in Numbers xxxi. 22, 23., and so be consecrated to God's service.

† The Hebrew is, *the wall fell under it;* the Jews say, sunk into the ground, so that no stones or rubbish remained to hinder their march into the city. Perhaps the whole of it did not fall, but only that part opposite to the Israelites, who immediately marched forward and took the city.

country, Go into the harlot's house, *and as this stood on the wall of the city, it is plain the whole wall did not fall at once,* and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. 23 And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel, *till they were well instructed in the Jewish religion, and then they were admitted into the congregation.* 24 And they burnt the city with fire, and all that [was] therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. 25 And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, *who had given credit to what she had told them,* and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel, [even] unto this day*, because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 And Joshua adjured [them] at that time, *made the elders of Israel take a solemn oath,* saying, Cursed [be] the man before the LORD, *from God's presence, and by his sentence,* that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest [son] shall he set up the gates of it; *he shall lose all his children in the work; the first, at the beginning; others, in the progress, by degrees; and the youngest in the close of it* †. 27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was [noised] throughout all the country.

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us learn to cultivate faith in God's promise; *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down,* Heb. xi. 20. The people believed that God would work this miracle, therefore they compassed it about, and waited patiently seven days, and thus their faith was exercised and improved. This was perfectly rational, because the promise was made by that Being, whose infinite power was able to effect it. We may and ought to trust God to fulfil his word,

* She was married to Salmon, a prince of the tribe of Judah, one of Christ's progenitors, see Matt. i. 5., and was alive when this book was written.

† We are told, in 1 Kings xvi. 34., that it was rebuilt in the time of Ahab, by Hiel the Bethelite, who was tempted by its pleasant situation; but it is added, *he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.* After this, it became a school of the prophets; Samuel and Elijah lived there; and Christ was there at the house of Zaccheus, where he did several miracles.

though things should seem improbable, for *nothing is too hard for him.* May we then *be strong in faith; that faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.*

2. Let us adore that Providence, which, by such unlikely methods, brings about his important designs. This procession had the appearance of pastime rather than a siege. A strange siege! No trenches or batteries; and even the armed men were not to use their arms. Doubtless the inhabitants of Jericho despised and laughed at them, bantered them, hissed at them, and thought themselves secure. But God intended to try the faith and obedience of his people; to teach them to expect victory, not from their sword or valour, but from his assistance and all-sufficiency. *His counsel shall stand.* The accomplishment of his promises is sure, whatever walls or hinderances lie in the way. Thus God deals with his people now; he exercises their virtue, by leading them through unexpected ways, and delaying the blessings they want and hope for. But when the end is answered, it will appear every way worthy of God, and conducive to their comfort and happiness.

3. We see that those who honour God, he will honour, ver. 27. Joshua did so, by exact obedience to his commands; and God appeared to be with him, gave him favour in the eyes of the Israelites, and spread his fame through all the country. If it be our care to follow God's directions, and observe his law, we shall find favour and good understanding in the sight of men.

CHAPTER VII.

In this chapter the Israelites are defeated at Ai; Joshua is deeply concerned on this melancholy occasion, and God instructeth him what to do; Achan is taken by lot, and he and all that belonged to him are destroyed in the valley of Achor.

1 BUT the children of Israel, *that is, one of them,* committed a trespass in the accursed thing, *in some valuable spoils, which by God's command were devoted to destruction;* for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel. *This anger manifested*

itself in the next expedition, to make them solicitous to find out the offender, and to be a warning to all others. 2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, *a city three miles west from Jericho,* which [is] beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. 3 And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; [and] make not all the people to labour thither; for they [are but] few. 4 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men; *and the townsmen were animated by seeing that so few came out against them,* and they, *the Israelites, dispirited by the immediate hand of God,* fled before the men of Ai. 5 And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them [from] before the gate [even] unto Shebarim, *that is, the place of breaches, so called, because here their army was broken and discomfited,* and smote them in the going down, *from the hill on which Ai stood, towards the plains of Jericho:* wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water, *the whole body of the people was extremely dismayed at this sign of God's displeasure.*

6 And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads, *shewing marks of the deepest contrition and repentance, as well as sorrow of mind.* 7 And Joshua said, Alas, O LORD God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan*! 8 O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! *Can I suspect thy power, or fidelity? What can I answer to the reproaches of our enemies, or what course can I take?* 9 For the Canaanites *from the sea-coast,* and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear [of it,] and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth, *they will utterly destroy us all when they hear that God has forsaken us: but, as if all this was a trifle, he adds,* and what wilt thou do unto thy great name, *thou wilt lose the glory of all thy wonders and miracles; cutting off our name will be no great loss, but what wilt thou do for thy great name? A most wise and devout remonstrance, and the best plea he could make use of.*

* This was the language, not of passion and unbelief, but solicitous concern. He could not comprehend the reason of the divine conduct, and wishes they had rather been content with their former conquests, than suffer such a defeat in their attempt of gaining more.

10 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? *do not continue grieving and afflicting thyself, but use means for relief.* 11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put [it] even among their own stuff; *Israel had sinned, transgressed the covenant, taken the devoted thing, stolen it privately, as if the omniscient God could not see. They dissembled, by denying and concealing it; and finally have converted it to their own use, confident it would never be called for.* 12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, [but] turned [their] backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. 13 Up, sanctify the people, *by washings, and fastings, and prayer,* and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, *that the guilt might not lie any longer upon them:* for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, [There is] an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. 14 In the morning, therefore, ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, [that] the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families [thereof;] and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man*. 15 And it shall be, [that] he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, *as the accursed thing ought to have been,* he and all that he hath; because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel, *by violating a precept so lately and so solemnly given, and after so remarkable a miracle as the taking of Jericho.*

16 So Joshua, *to shew his zeal and concern,* rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes, *brought lots for each tribe;* and the tribe of Judah was taken: 17 And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man: and Zabdi was taken: 18 And he brought his household man by man: and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken; *and he was immediately taken into custody, and brought to Joshua.*

* This process gave the offender an opportunity of confessing his guilt voluntarily, but his heart was hardened. Perhaps he thought others were guilty as well as himself, and that he might possibly escape.

19 And Joshua said unto Achan, *with the greatest tenderness and affection,* My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, *whose hand has so remarkably found thee out,* and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide [it] not from me. 20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: 21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment*, and two hundred shekels of silver, *worth about twenty-three pounds,* and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, *worth near an hundred pounds,* then I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they [are] hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. *Achan thought it a great pity that the fine garments should be destroyed, and the gold and silver go to the Lord's house.* 22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, [it was] hid in his tent, and the silver under it; *thus he was convicted by the discovery of the goods.* 23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD, *as a convincing evidence of the truth of the discovery, an acknowledgment of the divine omniscience, and the justice of the execution that was to be done.*

24 And Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, *who perhaps were privy to what he had done,* and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, *(which shews that he did not steal from want, but merely from covetousness),* and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. 25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day, *alluding to his name, which signifies, trouble.* And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day, *as they used to do over those that died ignominiously, that it might be a monument to warn others not to commit the like sin.* So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called The valley of Achor, unto this day.

REFLECTIONS.

1. HERE we may learn the evil tendency of sin: what disgrace and ruin it brings upon a nation! Societies often suffer for

* It was richly embroidered with gold and silver, and a variety of colours, as the word signifies. A plain proof, by the way, that there was commerce carried on between the Canaanites and the Babylonians.

the sins of individuals. We should guard against it in ourselves, and, as much as in us lieth, prevent it in others, and do nothing to be accessary to the guilt of others. *Stand in awe, and sin not.* We learn,

2. That good governors are greatly affected with the calamity and misery of their people; Joshua's distress was a sign of great generosity and benevolence, of tenderness and compassion. He lays to heart the distresses of the people. It is a good example when princes and magistrates are *zealous for the Lord of hosts.* They should be concerned for the prosperity of the nation, and lead the way in public humiliations, and every thing that has a tendency to promote reformation and the public happiness. It is not sufficient for them to punish public vices, but they must labour to reform them.

3. The glory of God ought to be our chief concern and main plea. No matter what becomes of us and our name, *if thine be glorified,* if thy perfections are seen and adored, and a tribute of praise and homage be paid to thee. It will grieve every good man that God's name is dishonoured. Our great concern should be, *that God in all things should be glorified.* It should be the matter of our prayers and endeavours; and we may take encouragement from that regard God has, and still shews, for it.

4 Consider the omniscience of God, as a motive to avoid sin. Achan was ready to think that the LORD could not see; when so much gold was saved for the tabernacle, a little could not be missed. But he was wretchedly mistaken. Thus sinners flatter themselves in their own eyes, *that God will not know;* that their sin will not be discovered; and promise themselves security: but this is great folly. They may be sure *their sin will find them out.* Among the many thousands of Israelites God sees the offender, though hid in the tent. He distinguishes between the precious and the vile. *The lot is cast into the lap,* and separates one out of all the tribes of Israel. Let us reverence this omniscient Being. *In him is no darkness at all.* Tremble for fear of him; labour to be approved of him; and let our conduct be such as to have no reason to be ashamed that God or men should know it.

5. Humble confession of sin is giving glory to God. Let us *give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him.* It gives glory to his justice, and to the holiness of his law, which is broken; it gives him the glory of his omniscience, by which he sees us, and finds us out. In order to this, it is necessary to be full and circumstantial in our confessions of sin: not

only to say, 'I acknowledge I have sinned,' but add particularly, *thus and thus have I done.* Reflect with sorrow on the several steps which led us to sin, and own, as Achan here does, all the aggravating circumstances. It was committed against precepts, motives, &c. Achan had no hope of escape, but we have. *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; but if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

6. *The love of money is the root of all evil:* Achan's covetous mind seduced him. He thought it an easy way of growing rich, and providing for his family; but it ruined him and his family too. Ill-gotten gain will prove bitterness in the end. It is very ill husbandry to get rich, if not by right, honest, and honourable ways. Let us, therefore, keep the world at a proper distance, and moderate our affections to it. The language of this story is, *Take heed and beware of covetousness, which is idolatry.*

7. The public execution of notorious offenders, is necessary to the welfare of society. It is necessary to deter others from sin to remove offenders out of the way, who are plagues to society, and avert those judgments with which they would be otherwise visited. Wicked men are the troublers of Israel, and bring guilt and ruin upon it. It is the will of God they should be troubled; he has ordained magistrates to be his ministers of *terror to evil-doers;* and not *to bear the sword in vain.* All private persons should join to discover and bring to punishment the workers of iniquity. This is the way to have tranquillity lengthened, and calamities removed. According to the beautiful words of the prophet *Hosea,* ch. ii. 15., in which he alludes to this story, *The valley of Achor* (or trouble) *is a door of hope.*

CHAPTER VIII.

Israel having put away the accursed thing, God returns unto them in mercy. We have here the method to be used for taking the city Ai; the success of the stratagem; and the solemn reading of the law, and writing it on stones, according to the words of Moses, *Deut.* xxvii. 5.

1 AND the LORD said unto Joshua, *who had been greatly discouraged and discomposed by what had happened,* Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land: *thus God assures him of complete victory, and then directs him what to do:* 2 And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king; *the city must be destroyed, lest the Canaanites should take possession of it, or the Israelites should confide in fortified places; and to encourage them, he gives them the spoil:* only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it. 3 So Joshua arose, and all the people of war to go up against Ai: and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night, *to lie in ambush behind the city.* 4 And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, [even] *five thousand of you,* behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready: 5 And I, and all the people that [are] with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them, 6 (For they will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them. 7 Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. 8 And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, [that] ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the LORD shall ye do. See, I have commanded you. 9 Joshua therefore sent them forth, *that is, the five thousand:* and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of Ai: but Joshua lodged that night among the people, *the twenty-five thou-*

sand remaining. 10 And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people, *to prove that no lives were lost,* and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai; *the elders went up to be witnesses of the action, as a council of war, and to assist in dividing the spoil.* 11 And all the people, [even the people] of war that [were] with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai: now [there was] a valley between them and Ai. 12 And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of the city*. 13 And when they had set the people, [even] all the host that [was] on the north of the city, and their liers in wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley, *and some small company with him.*

14 And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw [it,] that they hasted and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wist not that [there were] liers in ambush against him behind the city; *which is very probable, considering the city was close shut up to prevent spies coming in, or deserters going out.* 15 And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness, *towards the main body of the army.* 16 And all the people that [were] in Ai were called together to pursue after them: and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city, *suspecting no danger from the west part, and so left the city unguarded.* 17 And there was not a man left in Ai or Beth-el, that went not out after Israel, *which shows that some from the neighbouring city had joined the garrison at Ai:* and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel. 18 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that [is] in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that [he had] in his hand toward the city, *as a signal to the liers in wait.* 19 And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire, *some of the outer parts of it.* 20 And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to

* Probably there were two ambushes, one to surprise the enemy in front, and the other to take the city behind, while the main body might be stationed behind a hill, where the enemy could not see them.

flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers. 21 And when Joshua and all Israel, *the rest of the army that was with him, who seemed to fly away before,* saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai. 22 And the other, *the ambush that had taken the city,* issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side: and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape. 23 And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua. 24 And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword, *that is, the men unable to bear arms, and women and children.* 25 And [so] it was, [that] all that fell that day, both of men and women, [were] twelve thousand, [even] all the men of Ai *and Beth-el.* 26 For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai, *but still led them on, and continued to fight till all were destroyed.* 27 Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, *which was distributed in due proportion,* according unto the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua. 28 And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever*, [even] a desolation unto this day. 29 And the king of Ai, *who was the greatest offender, as a bad governor and a wicked king,* he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, *where he had used to sit in judgment, and had probably been guilty of great injustice and cruelty,* and *to* raise thereon a great heap of stones, [that remaineth] unto this day.

30 Then, *after the taking of Ai,* Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal†. 31 As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is

* *For ever* means only a long time; there was no prospect of its being rebuilt when this book was written. But we find, in *Nehem.* xi. 31., that it was built again, and both this and Beth-el were inhabited by *Benjamin.*

† This was at a considerable distance from Ai; but he took advantage of the terror that was struck into the Canaanites, to perform this act of religion.

written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up [any] iron; and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings, *in token of their covenant with God.* 32 And he wrote there upon the stones, *prepared for that purpose, and perhaps placed over the altar,* a copy of the law of Moses, *at least the ten commandments, or rather the blessings and curses contained in the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters of Deuteronomy,* which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. 33 And all Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. 34 And afterward he read, *or caused the Levites to read, after the sacrifices were over,* all the words of the law; the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them, *the members of their families, and the strangers the proselytes to their religion, were all present at this solemn service.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE see God is ready to return to his people when they put away their sin. When that is removed, God returns graciously; he is disposed to renew the friendship and union, and then also we may expect to receive direction, encouragement, and assistance from him. This is an encouragement to all to forsake their sins, and to cultivate *that godly sorrow for sin which worketh repentance that never needs to be repented of.* The language of his grace under the law and gospel too, is, *Return unto me, and I will return unto thee.*

2. Stratagems in war are lawful in themselves. There is indeed something peculiar in the circumstances of the Jewish people, having God, the sovereign of the world, for their king; but he never commanded any thing to be done that was unlawful in itself. Here was no faith violated or treaties broken; the breach of which is scandalous and abominable. The people of

Ai acted against the common rules of human prudence. It does not appear to be unlawful to deceive an enemy by a dubious action; and the common agreement among men seems to countenance this, where no previous compact renders it unlawful. But still there are degrees of honour to be observed, even towards enemies, that all men, especially christians, should show, and carefully avoid every degree of perjury and violation of public faith.

3. We learn, that amidst the greatest hurry of business, and the most agreeable scenes of life, the worship of God must not be neglected. Joshua and the people had great work before them; their enemies were intimidated, and we may be ready to think they should have now pushed forward. But they must take time to observe God's laws; pay their thanks to him for what is past, and seek further success. Amidst all the joy the victory occasioned, God was to be revered, and his blessings and curses pronounced, read and regarded. The more we are hurried with the affairs of this life, the more need we have to call off our thoughts, by renewing our dedication to God, recognising our solemn covenant, and *attending to the words of his law.* The more pleasant our circumstances are, and the greater prosperity we meet with, the more peculiar reason have we to acknowledge God, lest prosperity should prove a snare.

4. Persons of every rank, sex, and station should join in worshipping God, and attending on the instructions of his law. The elders, officers, and judges of Israel, were all to come *to hear the word of God's law,* and attend to the sacrifices. The poor stranger also, is *to join himself to the Lord.* The women and children were to attend these sacrifices and religious instructions. The greatest of men are not to think themselves above being religious, not for their own sakes only, but that their example may influence others, and engage them to the service of God. Heads of families should bring their wives and little ones to public ordinances, and make it their resolution that *they and theirs shall serve the Lord.* Remember, that religion is the concern of every man; that *fearing God, and keeping his commandments,* is the way to all prosperity in both worlds.

CHAPTER IX.

We have in this chapter a contrivance of the Gibeonites to gain peace and friendship with Israel; the discovery of their fraud, and Joshua's agreement to spare their lives, upon condition of their being in perpetual bondage.

1 AND it came to pass, when all the kings which [were] on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea, *that is, the Mediterranean,* over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite heard [thereof;] 2 That they gathered themselves together, *and entered into a confederacy,* to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord. *But this was not done till after they had heard of what the Gibeonites had done, as we shall see in the next chapter.*

3 And when the inhabitants of Gibeon* heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, 4 They did work wilily, *that is, craftily, with a design to deceive the Israelites,* and went and made as if they had been ambassadors *sent from some far country,* and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up *where they had leaked;* 5 And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, *that is, patched, as if they had been worn out with long travelling;* and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry [and] mouldy. 6 And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, *his head quarters,* and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, *the princes and elders who used to meet in council with Joshua,* We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us. 7 And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us, *and are of the people with whom we are not to make a covenant or friendship;* and how shall we make a league with you? And they said unto Joshua, We [are] thy servants, *not enemies, but friends, who will submit to any conditions of peace. This awakened his suspicion,* and Joshua said unto them, Who [are] ye? and from whence come ye? 9 And they said unto him, From a

* Gibeon was a royal city, belonging to the Hivites, v. 7., and had other towns under its government. They had little reason to be afraid, as they had many mighty men among them. See *ch.* x. 2.

very far country thy servants are come*, because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, (*not mentioning what was done lately; as if they had not heard thereof, because of their remoteness*), 10 And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that [were] beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which [was] at Ashtaroth. 11 Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We [are] your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. *They would have Joshua believe that they were ambassadors, who did not come of their own accord, but were sent by the leading men of their nation. They then go on to describe the length of their journey.* 12 This our bread we took hot [for] our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: 13 And these bottles of wine, which we filled, [were] new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. 14 And the men took of their victuals, *to examine whether or not they were so old and decayed; and rashly, and inconsiderately took their word*, and asked not [counsel] at the mouth of the LORD. 15 And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

16 And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they [were] their neighbours, and [that] they dwelt among them. 17 And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day, *that is, the army in their march came to their country.* Now their cities [were] Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim. 18 And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes, *because they were deprived of the spoil of such a rich, populous, and royal city.* 19 But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them. *It will be violating our oath, a dishonour to God, and a reproach to our reli-*

* They avoid coming to particulars, and answer only in general terms; the way of all deceitful men. At length they pretended that religion was their motive, and a regard to the God of Israel; they thought this the best way to secure Joshua's favourable opinion.

gion, and will prejudice the Gibeonites against it. But This will we do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them. 21 And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them; *let them be as slaves, doing the greatest drudgery in serving at the altar, which otherwise all the people, in their turns, must have done.* 22 And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We [are] very far from you; when ye dwell among us? 23 Now therefore ye [are] cursed, *adjudged to a mean, calamitous condition,* and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water from the house of my God. 24 And they answered Joshua, *in a very prudent manner, so as to excite his pity, and save their lives,* and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing. 25 And now, behold, we [are] in thine hand, *ready to submit to thy appointment:* as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do. 26 And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not. 27 And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose. *It is probable they left their own cities (for the Israelites afterwards dwelt in them) and that they were distributed through the tribes, as the Levites were. At length the curse was turned into a blessing; they lived near God's house, had the benefit of ordinances, and afterwards were called Nethinims,* Ezra viii. 20., *because they were devoted to God, and a sacred kind of servants, as Josephus calls them.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE see here the obstinacy of sinners, in using those things as encouragements to sin, which ought to deter them from it. These kings were confederate against Israel, because they heard that other kings were not able to stand singly; but all were destroyed in a miraculous manner. Their wisest way would have been to have sought for terms of peace; but they would venture

to oppose the people, though they could not but know what had been done for them. There is too much of this temper among sinners now; though they know it is vain to contend with God; *when he judges he will overcome.* But they still venture on; and *run on the thick bosses of his buckler,* Job xv. 26., to their own destruction. A lamentable case indeed!

2. Religion is often made use of as a pretence, where secular interest is the only thing intended. The Gibeonites pretended great regard for God, and desired to join his people, to become servants of him who had such power and wrought such miracles; but they only wanted to save their lives, and secure their possessions. This is too common a case. Men talk much of God and religion, to answer their temporal ends: but *God cannot be deceived,* though men may. *He desireth truth in the inward parts;* and the hypocrisy of the heart is an abomination unto him.

3. Let us learn to avoid rash judgment. The Israelites hastily made a league, without consulting the Lord, which might easily have been done. Then they had acted wisely and safely. Let us guard against too hasty a temper, especially in such solemn affairs as vows and engagements. Remembering Solomon's advice, *Be not rash with thy mouth, or hasty to utter any thing before God,* in the way of vows or promises. Consult him; his word, by diligent search; his providence, by earnest prayer. Bishop Hall, and after him Mr. Henry, caution us from this story against taking up any sentiments rashly, because they have the appearance of antiquity. Many good men have done this, and been strangely obstinate. But errors are never the better for being patched and seemingly old. When persons judge of men or things rashly, it is a sign that they have not deliberated, nor duly weighed the evidence and reasons for them, nor consulted God. Let it teach us *in all our ways to acknowledge God, and he will direct our paths.*

4. Let us learn to reverence an oath, and to keep close to our solemn engagements. We ought to stand by our word, and be punctual to our bargain, though it should be to our loss or detriment. The Israelites did so, though their oath was fraudulently obtained. It is monstrous to violate promises and engagements, when made with all honesty and fairness. Had the Israelites understood the evasions of the church of Rome, and acted upon their principles, they had had no cause to mourn; Eleazar the high priest could have given them a dispensation to break it; or have rejected them as heretics, and therefore no faith was to be

kept with them. But they had not so learned the God of Israel; *they observed the oath;* and it was well they did, for God would highly have resented the breach of it; and he afterwards did so, as we find in 2 Sam. xxi. 1., *And there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year, for Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.* It is an undoubted maxim, that men lose more by making God their enemy, than they can possibly gain by any fraudulent or indirect methods. Therefore, *let integrity and uprightness* guide and *preserve us;* remembering it is the character of one that shall inhabit God's holy hill, *that he walketh uprightly, speaketh the truth in his heart; and though he swears to his own hurt, yet he changes not.* Psalm xv.

CHAPTER X.

We have here an account of a confederacy formed against Gibeon by the neighbouring kings; their extraordinary defeat by Joshua, while the sun and moon stood still; and, finally, their execution.

1 NOW it came to pass, when Adoni-zedec king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them; 2 That they feared greatly, because Gibeon [was] a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it [was] greater than Ai, and all the men thereof [were] mighty. 3 Wherefore Adoni-zedec king of Jerusalem*, sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, *four neighbouring princes,* saying, 4 Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon, *and chastise the Gibeonites for their treachery in going to Joshua, and giving him possession of their strong and royal city:* for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel, *and thus at once adds to his strength, tempts others to revolt, and gives him full information of the state of all the country.* 5 Therefore the five kings of the Amorites,

* Adoni-zedec appears to have been the most active person, and the leader and commander of the expedition; his name signifies *king of righteousness,* the same as his predecessor Melchizedec, and he was king of Salem.

the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it.

6 And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants, *who have put ourselves under thy protection,* come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us. 7 So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour; *he resolutely undertook their defence, but first consulted God.*

8 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee. *A sign that God was pleased with their sparing the Gibeonites; else he would not have prospered them in fighting for their defence.* 9 Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, [and] went up from Gilgal all night. *The distance was about twenty miles, and coming upon them unexpectedly, he threw them all into confusion.* 10 And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. *And to make this victory the more remarkable, God wrought two miracles.* 11 And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, [and] were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: [they were] more which died with hailstones than [they] whom the children of Israel slew with the sword *.

12 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. *Joshua saw the confusion his enemies were in; and he thought many would escape before they could be destroyed, or at least that they would reach the fenced cities; and he felt a strong impulse upon his mind that God would work an extraordinary miracle in favour of Israel; and therefore,*

* An ingenious author has attempted to prove that these were real stones; but whether they were such, or only great hail-stones, it was a very extraordinary providence that they should do such execution, and not hurt one of the Israelites, who might be mingled with the enemy, or at least very near them; more especially when we consider that some fled to the north, and others to the south, according to the situation of the places to which they fled. But that related in ver. 12. was a still greater miracle.

in the presence of all the people, and at the head of his army, he said, Sun, stand thou still, &c. This was probably uttered about noon. 23 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies *. [Is] not this written in the book of Jasher? *or, the upright* †. So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. 14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, *in that climate,* that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel, *and did all this in answer to Joshua's prayer.* 15 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal; *when he had performed all things related to the end of this chapter, where this verse should have been inserted.*

16 But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah, *that is, near to it.* 17 And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah. 18 And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them *till the pursuit is over.* 19 And stay ye not, [but] pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for the LORD your God hath delivered them into your hand. 20 And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest [which] remained of them entered into fenced cities. 21 And all the people returned to the camp to

* Some suppose that this was no miracle at all, and that it is only a poetical phrase, to intimate that Joshua and the people did two days' work in one. Some Jewish writers say, there was an extraordinary twilight only, occasioned by a reflection from the hail-stones; or that a luminous meteor was raised on this occasion. But these opinions are not worth a serious answer. The words themselves evidently declare it to be a real miracle, and that daylight continued, the sun appearing in the midst of heaven, as it did when Joshua uttered these words, see Hab. iii. 11. To this there have been two objections made. 1. That the sun standing still, is directly contrary to the truest system of philosophy. To this it is sufficient to answer, that the historian wrote not philosophically, (had he done so we should not have understood him till a few centuries ago), but according to common appearances, and vulgar apprehensions: when the motion of the earth ceased, the sun and moon would appear to stand still. It is objected, 2. Why do we not read of this in heathen writers? To this it is answered, there is no mention of any history before the Trojan war, which was long after Joshua's time. But there are ancient traces of this among the heathen, Herodotus mentions such a tradition among the Egyptians. Some of the pagan fables have an evident allusion to this. Phaëton's guiding the chariot of the sun, and lengthening the day, and who is supposed to have lived about Joshua's time, is a plain allusion to this. Above all, the records of China mention such a thing having happened in the reign of one of their emperors, who lived about the time of Joshua; a plain proof it was not a vapour or meteor, for then it could not have been seen in China.

† A chronicle containing the memorable acts of God's people in those times. See 2 Sam. i. 18.

Joshua at Makkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel, *as it was when they came out of Egypt*. *See on* Exodus xi. 17.

22 Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave. 23 And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, [and] the king of Eglon. 24 And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. *This was not done out of pride and contempt of their dignity, much less with a design to insult them; but to prove that God had fulfilled his promise in bringing them and their country into subjection to them, and as an encouragement to them and the people to proceed in attacking the other kings and cities.* 25 And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight. 26 And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening. 27 And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, [that] Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, [which remain] until this very day.

28 And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that [were] therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah, as he did unto the king of Jericho.

29 Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah: 30 And the LORD delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel, and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that [were] therein; he let none remain in it; but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho.

31 And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it: 32 And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that [were] therein, according to all

that he had done to Libnah. 33 Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining.

34 And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it, and fought against it: 35 And they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that [were] therein he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

36 And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron; and they fought against it: 37 And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that [were] therein; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon; but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that [were] therein.

38 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and fought against it: 39 And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that [were] therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king.

40 So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded. 41 And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon. 42 And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal, *to their families, to share the spoil, and return thanks to God in his tabernacle, which was placed there.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. HERE is an instance of the strange malignity sinners have against those who were once their companions, but are now joined to the Israel of God. Satan and his agents stir up their rage against those that make peace with God. Angels welcome their conversion with songs, devils with fury, and their old companions with scorn. Let young converts expect this, and not think

it strange, nor be discouraged; *if God be for them, none can be against them;* none rationally will, none successfully can.

2. How glorious does God appear in his dealings with his people, and how awful in his judgments upon his enemies! Rather than the Canaanites shall escape from Israel, storms of hail-stones overtook and destroyed them, and did not hurt Israel. There is no fleeing from God; he can easily shoot out of his treasure hail-stones, that *he reserves against the day of battle and of war,* Job xxxviii. 23. *What a fearful thing is it to fall into the hands of the living God!* and how vain is it to attempt escaping his indignation! What a wonderful miracle was the stopping of the sun! God kindled it up at first, and directs the motions of the earth, the moon, and the sun. He can stop them without causing any confusion, and set them all in motion again. *All,* as the Psalmist calls them, *are his servants.* Let us adore the wisdom of this miracle. Some have strangely objected against it, that it was unworthy of God to work such a miracle, to give one inconsiderable nation an advantage over another. But *shall man be wiser than God?* He saw it fit; and there are good reasons which we also can see. Joshua was obliged to support his friends and guard his people; it was necessary to rescue the proselytes. But it was chiefly designed to display the being and perfections of God to the whole world; not only to give them an high idea of Israel, as God's people, but high and just ideas of the God of Israel. Almost all the heathen, especially the Canaanites, worshipped the host of heaven, the sun and moon, as the king and queen of heaven. This miracle demonstrated the power of JEHOVAH, as superior to their gods; and showed their impotency, when he could make even them contribute to the ruin of their worshippers. There was nothing extraordinary in Joshua's success. Hail-stones they might think proceeded from natural causes; but the other was a plain, evident, and indisputable miracle. It had a tendency to prevent the Israelites from falling into this wretched idolatry, and to engage the Canaanites to submit, and become subjects to JEHOVAH; and to induce other nations, who could not but see and own this miracle, to adore almighty God, *who does according to his will among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of this lower world.* How happy is the church under the divine care, who has all elements and all worlds at his command! *Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord!*

3. Let the success we have experienced in our spiritual war-

fare over some enemies, make us resolute and courageous. It should animate us against our fears, and excite and support our courage, for there is still the same power and grace in God. Let us go forth in an humble dependance on him to fight for us, to bring every enemy into subjection, and bruise Satan under our feet shortly; and *we shall at length be more than conquerors over all our enemies, through Him who loved us.*

CHAPTER XI.

This chapter gives an account of the conquest of the northern parts of Canaan; Providence kept them quiet for a while till Israel was refreshed, and fit to begin another campaign.

1 AND it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor, *who was the chief king of that part of the country,* had heard [those things,] that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, 2 And to the kings that [were] on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Cinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west; 3 [And to] the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and [to] the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and [to] the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh, *who all united against Israel, as a common enemy.* 4 And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that [is] upon the sea-shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many; *a prodigious army, with horses and chariots, armed with iron weapons, and thought they should easily destroy the Israelites, who only fought on foot.* 5 And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

6 And the LORD said unto Joshua, *who went to ask direction from him,* Be not afraid because of them*: for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, *cut their sinews, and thus unfit them for war;* and burn their chariots with fire. 7 So Joshua came, and all the

* We can scarcely suppose that Joshua was afraid; but some of the people might be discouraged by their number, and horses, and chariots; therefore Joshua is directed to encourage them in the name of the Lord, and to assure them of success, and he fixes the time.

people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them *before they were aware, or had time to draw up in order of battle.* 8 And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, *a chief city of Syrophœnicia, which lay on the coast of the Mediterranean sea,* and unto Misrephoth-maim, *or, the salt pits, (in the Hebrew, burnings of waters,)*, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining. 9 And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire. *This shewed his readiness to obey God's command, and his firm confidence in his power and promises; for no doubt it was an act of great self-denial to destroy the horses and chariots, which would have been so useful in their further conquests.* 10 And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword, *that is, Jabin, the chief of these confederate kings, who had escaped to his own city:* for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms. 11 And they smote all the souls that [were] therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying [them:] there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire. 12 And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, [and] he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. 13 But [as for] the cities that stood still in their strength, *that were not destroyed in the attack, nor utterly ruined in the taking of them,* Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; [that] did Joshua burn, *as a warning to the other cities, and because the king thereof was chiefly concerned in raising this last war.* 14 And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe; *they left none to molest them, or to infect them or their posterity by their idolatry.* 15 As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.

16 So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same; *either the mountainous part of the country, or, as some think, Beth-el, the mountain where Jacob once lived, and where he was first called Israel.* 17 [Even] from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir,

even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them. 18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings *. 19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all [other] they took in battle, *that is, by assault; this made the war so long. They might have had some terms of peace, but they were desperately resolved to fight it out to the last;* 20 For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, [and] that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses. *God gave them up to their own pride and stubbornness, as a punishment for their idolatry, lewdness, and other abominations.*

21 And at that time came Joshua, *and Caleb also, (see chap.* xv. 14.) and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, *that tall, gigantic people, who had affrighted the spies, and who dwelt in the caves or strong holds; these were cut off some at one time, and some at another;* from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. 22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained; *these were Philistine giants, from whence came Goliath.* 23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war, *that is, open wars; he so far subdued it that none of the inhabitants dared to rise up in arms, so that he could peaceably make a division; and he assigned to each tribe their inheritance; who afterwards divided it among themselves.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE may observe the goodness of God in animating his people when fresh difficulties arose. The chariots and horsemen terrified Israel; they had never seen such a sight before; they were no match for such an host. Josephus talks of twenty thousand chariots, and some hundred thousands of men. But when God

* It was about five years before that country was entirely subdued. This was a great exercise of their faith and patience; it kept them dependant on God, as they still wanted his help; and made them bold, warlike, and resolute, to secure their conquests.

says, *Be not afraid*, that is enough, if there were a thousand times as many. Such encouragement he gives to the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, who are fighting for the heavenly Canaan. He assures them of success, and encourages them against their fears. Let us then thank God, and take courage. Let us depend on him, whose right hand and holy arm is able to baffle the proudest, the most powerful and numerous foes.

2. It is a good thing to be able to appeal to God that we have done as he commanded us. A remarkable manner of speaking is made use of in this chapter; it is often said, *as God commanded Moses*. This intimates to us our duty. We are to observe the commands of the divine law; what Jesus, who had a divine commission, has enjoined. We are to look narrowly into our lives, and to compare them with the rule. We are not only to do this or the other thing that he commands, but to leave nothing undone; *to walk in all his statutes and ordinances blameless*, and to be *complete in all the will of God*. Then we may review our work with pleasure, and God will accept it through Jesus Christ, and mercifully reward it through the riches of his grace.

3. Sometimes God's people meet with the most formidable enemies at last, in the close of their days, when their warfare is just accomplished. The Anakims had so terrified Israel before, that they thought they should never enter and possess Canaan; and thereby these enemies exposed them to sorrow and labour for forty years. Thus Satan is sometimes most busy, and temptations are most strong, at the end of life. Death is then to be attacked. Christians have many fears about it; some are *all their life-time subject to bondage;* but God will give them the victory, and *not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able*. Israel at length rested from war. Death is the last enemy to be destroyed; and then *our warfare will be over*. But we are not till then to think ourselves secure, and past all danger. Let us resolutely press on; over this last foe we are sure of victory; and *if we are faithful unto death, we shall receive a crown of life;* and enter triumphantly into *that rest which remains for the people of God*.

CHAPTER XII.

This chapter contains only a recapitulation of Israel's victories over the Canaanites, under Moses and Joshua.

1 NOW these [are] the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon, unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east: 2 Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, [and] ruled from Aroer, which [is] upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, [which is] the border of the children of Ammon; 3 And from the plain to the sea of Chinneroth on the east, and unto the sea of the plain, [even] the salt sea on the east, the way to Beth-jeshimoth; and from the south, under Ashdoth-pisgah: 4 And the coast of Og king of Bashan, [which was] of the remnant of the giants, that dwelt at Ashtaroth, and at Edrei, 5 And reigned in mount Hermon, and in Salcha, and in all Bashan, unto the border of the Geshurites, and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. 6 Them did Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel smite: and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it [for] a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

7 And these [are] the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon, even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel [for] a possession according to their divisions; 8 In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: 9 The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which [is] beside Beth-el, one; 10 The king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; 11 The king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; 12 The king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; 13 The king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; 14 The king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; 15 The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; 16 The king of Makkedah, one; the king of Beth-el, one;

17 The king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one; 18 The king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; 19 The king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; 20 The king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; 21 The king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; 22 The king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jockneam of Carmel, one; 23 The king of Dor in the coast of Dor, one; the king of the nations of Gilgal, one; 24 The king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty and one.

CHAPTER XIII.

There is nothing remarkable in this chapter. It only contains an account of the land remaining unconquered; a command to divide the land on this side Jordan; and an account of the country which Moses divided to the two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan.

1 NOW Joshua was old [and] stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old [and] stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed. 2 This [is] the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri, 3 From Sihor, which [is] before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, [which] is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites: 4 From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah, that [is] beside the Sidonians, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites: 5 And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sun-rising, from Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath. 6 All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-maim, [and] all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee. 7 Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh, 8 With whom the Reubenites, and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them beyond Jordan eastward, [even] as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them; 9 From Aroer, that [is] upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that [is] in the midst of the river, and all the plain of Medeba unto Dibon; 10 And all the cities of Sihon king of

the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon; 11 And Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites, and Maachathites, and all mount Hermon, and all Bashan unto Salcah; 12 All the kingdom of Og in Bashan which reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants: for these did Moses smite, and cast them out. 13 Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites: but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites unto this day. 14 Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire [are] their inheritance, as he said unto them.

15 And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben [inheritance] according to their families. 16 And their coast was from Aroer, that [is] on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that [is] in the midst of the river, and all the plain by Medeba; 17 Heshbon, and all her cities that [are] in the plain; Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baalmeon, 18 And Jahaza, and Kedemoth, and Mephath, 19 And Kirjathaim, and Sibmah, and Zarethshahar, in the mount of the valley, 20 And Beth-peor, and Ashdoth-pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth, 21 And all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, [which were] dukes of Sihon, dwelling in the country. 22 Balaam also the son of Beor, the sooth-sayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them. 23 And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border [thereof.] This [was] the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof.

24 And Moses gave [inheritance] unto the tribe of Gad, [even] unto the children of Gad, according to their families. 25 And their coast was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer that [is] before Rabbah; 26 And from Heshbon unto Ramath-mizpeh, and Betonim; and from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir; 27 And in the valley, Beth-aram, and Beth-nimrah, and Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, Jordan and [his] border, [even] unto the edge of the sea of Chinneroth on the other side Jordan eastward. 28 This [is] the inheritance of the children of Gad after their families, the cities, and their villages.

29 And Moses gave [inheritance] unto the half tribe of Manasseh: and [this] was [the possession] of the half tribe of the children of Manasseh by their families. 30 And their coast was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which [are] in Bashan, threescore cities: 31 And half Gilead, and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, [were pertaining] unto the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, [even] to the one half of the children of Machir by their families. 32 These [are the countries] which Moses did distribûte for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other side Jordan, by Jericho, eastward. 33 But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not [any] inheritance: the LORD God of Israel [was] their inheritance, as he said unto them.

CHAPTER XIV.

We have in this chapter a general account of the manner in which the land was to be divided between the nine tribes and a half on this side Jordan; Caleb's claim of Hebron, and his request granted.

1 AND these [are the countries] which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance unto them, *according to the direction of Moses*, Numbers xxxiv. 17, 18., *and the following verses.* 2 By lot [was] their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses*, for the nine tribes, and [for] the half tribe, *though Levi was excluded from any share in the division, yet Joseph was divided into two.* 3 For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and an half tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them. 4 For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell [in,] with their suburbs for their cattle, and for their substance. 5 As the LORD commanded Moses,

* This was the best method of doing it, as it was acknowledging God's right to the land, and leaving it to his disposal; it was the way to prevent murmuring, and to make them content; and it would make it evident that the prophecies of Jacob and Moses, concerning the situation of the several tribes, were from God.

so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land; *but before they began to cast lots, Caleb put in his claim.*

6 Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal, *where the tabernacle was, and where the lots were to be cast with reverence and seriousness, as an appeal to God, the great proprietor of the land:* and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, *attended by the princes of Judah, to whose tribe he belonged, and who waited upon him with great respect as the oldest man in all Israel, except Joshua; and he* said unto him, *that is, to Joshua,* Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God, concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea, *I appeal to thee for the truth of it.* 7 Forty years old [was] I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as [it was] in mine heart, *what I thought of the land, and of our going to possess it,* Numbers xiii. 30. 8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt, *discouraged and dispirited them:* but I wholly followed the LORD my God. 9 And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land, *those parts about Hebron,* whereon thy feet have trodden, shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. 10 And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while [the children of] Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I [am] this day fourscore and five years old. *He celebrates the goodness of God in preserving him, in his escape from all the perils of the wilderness, when the carcasses of his brethren fell there; and to obviate a natural objection, that he was now too old for action, he adds,* 11 As yet I [am as] strong this day as [I was] in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength [was] then, even so [is] my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in, *I am not only fit for counsel and advice, but for action, fit still to lead and head an army.* 12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day, *the mountainous country, where Hebron lay,* (see chap. xi. 21.), *and which God promised to me,* for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims [were] there, and [that] the cities [were] great [and] fenced. If so be the LORD [will be] with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. *Though the enterprise be very difficult, yet through God's assistance, (which I promise myself), I doubt not but to effect it.* 13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of

Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance, *the country-towns and villages thereabouts, for the city itself was given to the Levites,* ch. xxi. 11, 12. *Joshua approved his motion, commended his courage, granted his request, and prayed God to succeed him in his expedition and give him a comfortable settlement there. Hebron had been taken before by Joshua, and some think the Canaanites and Anakims had got possession of it again, and that Caleb dislodged them when it was given him.* 14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. 15 And the name of Hebron before [was] Kirjath-arba; [which Arba was] a great man among the Anakims, *he built and fortified it**. And *after this* the land had rest from war; *which gave them time for dividing it.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. LET us acknowledge the hand of God in fixing the bounds of our habitation. *He chooses our inheritance for us;* not indeed in a miraculous way, but his providence over-rules such events, and his hand is to be owned in our settlement. He determines for us far better than we should do for ourselves. Let us therefore refer ourselves to him, and praise him for a comfortable settlement in life. If *the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places,* let us bless God, who *is the portion of our inheritance, and who maintaineth our right.*

2. It is our wisdom and duty to follow the Lord fully, as that will afford us joy and comfort hereafter. It is our wisdom steadily to adhere to God and our duty, and *to be upright before him.* It is a delightful character to be resolutely good in a degenerate age; like Caleb, when all the spies but himself and another were of a different mind, and provoked God. Let us be willing to bear or resign any thing, for the testimony of a good conscience and the favour of God. It is particularly honourable *to follow the Lord fully,* when others forsake him; this will afford us pleasing reflections hereafter; it will be our joy in the decline of life, that we followed God in our earliest days; and he will signalize us by

* Here Sarah died, see Gen. xxiii. 2. The cave of Machpelah, where their ancestors were buried, was near this place; which some think led Caleb here when he came to spy out the land. Hebron was a city of refuge, and belonged to the Levites, see chap. xxi. 11, 12., but Caleb had all the country round about; and it would give him peculiar pleasure to have God's ministers dwell among his posterity. Here also David was anointed, and reigned seven years.

special tokens of his favour; *They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels.* Let young persons remember this, choose the way of truth, and cleave to God's testimonies.

3. Let aged christians learn of this good old man, to see and adore the hand of God in preserving their lives, and continuing them in such comfortable circumstances even to very advanced years. Caleb speaks of it with an air of seriousness and gratitude, *the Lord hath kept me alive.* Our God hath kept us alive, preserved us from dangers, supplied us with necessaries and comforts, *his visitation supports our spirits.* Those that have lived longest have peculiar reason to acknowledge the care of a kind Providence, especially if, like Caleb, they have buried almost all those of their own age and standing. They should be thankful to God for his care and mercy; and remember they are not to sit down in indolence and inactivity. If God continues their understanding and capacity for service, it should be improved for his honour, and the benefit of posterity. It is their duty to serve God and their generation faithfully all their days: and then they may be assured, as Caleb was, that *God will be with them,* that *he will never leave nor forsake them,* and that is sufficient encouragement against the greatest difficulties. They have his promise to depend upon, Isa. xlvi. 4., *And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.*

CHAPTER XV.

From hence to the end of the twenty-first chapter is an account of the division of the land; in which there is nothing very important or instructive. We have here an account of the borders of the lot of Judah; Caleb's portion and conquest; Othniel's valour and reward; the request of Achsah; and the Jebusites not conquered.

1 [THIS] then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; [even] to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward [was] the uttermost part of the south coast. 2 And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea, from the bay that looketh southward: 3 And it went out to the south side

to Maaleh-acrabbim, and passed along to Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadesh-barnea, and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar, and fetched a compass from Karkaa: 4 [From thence] it passed towards Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea: this shall be your south coast. 5 And the east border [was] the salt sea, [even] unto the end of Jordan. And [their] border in the north quarter [was] from the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan: 6 And the border went up to Beth-hogla, and passed along by the north of Beth-arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben: 7 And the border went up towards Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward, looking towards Gilgal, that [is] before the going up to Adummim, which [is] on the south side of the river: and the border passed towards the waters of En-shemesh, and the goings out thereof were at En-rogel: 8 And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom, unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same [is] Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that [lieth] before the valley of Hinnom westward, which [is] at the end of the valley of the giants northward: 9 And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Neph-toah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, which [is] Kirjath-jearim: 10 And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of mount Jearim, which [is] Chesalon, on the north side, and went down to Beth-shemesh, and passed on to Timnah: 11 And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward: and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel; and the goings out of the border were at the sea. 12 And the west border [was] to the great sea, and the coast [thereof.] This [is] the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families.

13 And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh, he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, [even] the city of Arba the father of Anak, which [city is] Hebron. 14 And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. 15 And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before [was] Kirjath-sepher. 16 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. 17 And Othniel the son

of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. 18 And it came to pass, as she came [unto him,] that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off [her] ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldst thou? 19 Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs. 20 This [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families.

21 And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah towards the coast of Edom southward were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur, 22 And Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah, 23 And Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan, 24 Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth, 25 And Hazor, Hadatah, and Kerioth, [and] Hezron, which [is] Hazor, 26 Amam, and Shema, and Moladah, 27 And Hazar-gaddah, and Heshmon, and Beth-palet, 28 And Hazar-shual, and Beer-sheba, and Biz-jothjah, 29 Baalah, and Iim, and Azem, 30 And Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah, 31 And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah, 32 And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities [are] twenty and nine, with their villages: 33 [And] in the valley, Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah, 34 And Zanoah, and En-gannim, Tappuah, and Enam, 35 Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah, 36 And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages: 37 Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdal-gad, 38 And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel, 39 Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon, 40 And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish, 41 And Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages: 42 Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan, 43 And Jiphtah, and Ashnah, and Nezib, 44 And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah; nine cities with their villages: 45 Ekron, with her towns, and her villages: 46 From Ekron even unto the sea, all that [lay] near Ashdod, with their villages: 47 Ashdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt, and the great sea, and the border [thereof:] 48 And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh, 49 And Dannah, and Kirjath-sannah, which [is] Debir, 50 And Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim, 51 And Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages: 52 Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean, 53 And Janum, and Beth-tappuah, and Aphekah, 54 And Humtah, and Kirjath-arba, which [is] Hebron, and Zior; nine cities with their villages: 55 Maon,

Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah, 56 And Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah, 57 Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah; ten cities with their villages: 58 Halhul, Beth-zur, and Gedor, 59 And Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon; six cities with their villages: 60 Kirjath-baal, which [is] Kirjath-jearim, and Rabbah; two cities with their villages: 61 In the wilderness, Beth-arabah, Middin, and Secacah, 62 And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and En-gedi; six cities with their villages.

63 As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

CHAPTER XVI.

Contains an account of the general borders of the sons of Joseph; the border of the inheritance of Ephraim; and the Canaanites in Gezer not conquered.

1 AND the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Beth-el, 2 And goeth out from Beth-el to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth, 3 And goeth down westward, to the coast of Japhleti, unto the coast of Beth-horon the nether, and to Gezer: and the goings out thereof are at the sea. 4 So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

5 And the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families was [thus:] even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Ataroth-addar, unto Beth-horon the upper; 6 And the border went out towards the sea to Michmethah on the north side; and the border went about eastward unto Taanath-shiloh, and passed by it on the east to Janoah; 7 And it went down from Janoah, to Ataroth, and to Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan. 8 The border went from Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah; and the goings out thereof were at the sea. This [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families. 9 And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim [were] among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.

10 And they drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute.

CHAPTER XVII.

An account of the lot of Manasseh; his coast; the Canaanites not driven out from thence; and the children of Joseph obtain another lot.

1 THERE was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh; for he [was] the first born of Joseph; [to wit,] for Machir the first born of Manasseh, the father of Gilead: because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan. 2 There was also [a lot] for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hepher, and for the children of Shemida: these [were] the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families.

3 But Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these [are] the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, and Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 4 And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father. 5 And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which [were] on the other side Jordan; 6 Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons: and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

7 And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, and [lieth] before Shechem; and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of En-tappuah. 8 [Now] Manasseh had the land of Tappuah: but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh [belonged] to the children of Ephraim; 9 And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river: these cities of Ephraim [are] among the cities of Manasseh: the coast of Manasseh also [was] on the north side of the river, and

the outgoings of it were at the sea. 10 Southward [it was] Ephraim's, and northwards [it was] Manasseh's, and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher, on the north, and in Issachar on the east. 11 And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher, Beth-shean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of En-dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, [even] three countries.

12 Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out [the inhabitants of] those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. 13 Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

14 And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me [but] one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I [am] a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto? 15 And Joshua answered them, If thou [be] a great people, [then] get thee up to the wood [country,] and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee. 16 And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, [both they] who [are] of Beth-shean and her towns, and [they] who [are] of the valley of Jezreel. 17 And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, [even] to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot [only:] 18 But the mountain shall be thine; for it [is] a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the out-goings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, [and] though they [be] strong.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The setting up of the tabernacle at Shiloh; the remainder of the land is described, and divided by lot.

1 AND the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.

2 And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. 3 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long [are] ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you? 4 Give out from among you three men for [each] tribe: and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them; and they shall come [again] to me. 5 And they shall divide it into seven parts: Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north. 6 Ye shall therefore describe the land [into] seven parts, and bring [the description] hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. 7 But the Levites have no part among you; for the priesthood of the LORD [is] their inheritance: and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them. 8 And the men arose, and went away: and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots for you before the LORD in Shiloh. 9 And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts, in a book, and came [again] to Joshua to the host at Shiloh. 10 And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.

11 And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. 12 And their border on the north side was from Jordan; and the border went up the side of Jericho on the north side, and went

up through the mountains westward; and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Beth-aven. 13 And the border went over from thence towards Luz, to the side of Luz, which [is] Beth-el, southward; and the border descended to Ataroth-adar, near the hill that [lieth] on the south side of the nether Beth-horon. 14 And the border was drawn [thence,] and compassed the corner of the sea southward, from the hill that [lieth] before Beth-horon southward; and the goings out thereof were at Kirjath-baal, which [is] Kirjath-jearim, a city of the children of Judah: this was the west quarter. 15 And the south quarter [was] from the end of Kirjath-jearim, and the border went out on the west, and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah: 16 And the border came down to the end of the mountain that [lieth] before the valley of the son of Hinnom, [and] which [is] in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to En-rogel, 17 And was drawn from the north, and went forth to En-shemesh, and went forth toward Geliloth, which [is] over against the going up of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben, 18 And passed along towards the side over against Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah: 19 And the border passed along to the side of Beth-hoglah northward: and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea at the south end of Jordan: this [was] the south coast. 20 And Jordan was the border of it on the east side. This [was] the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families.

21 Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, and Beth-hoglah, and the valley of Keziz, 22 And Beth-arabah, and Zemaraim, and Beth-el, 23 And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah, 24 And Chephar-haammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba; twelve cities with their villages: 25 Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth, 26 And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah, 27 And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah, 28 And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, which [is] Jerusalem, Gibeath, [and] Kirjath; fourteen cities with their villages. This [is] the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

CHAPTER XIX.

The lots of Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan; and the children of Israel give Joshua an inheritance.

1 AND the second lot came forth to Simeon, [even] for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. 2 And they had in their inheritance Beer-sheba, Sheba, and Moladah, 3 And Hazar-shual, and Balah, and Azem, 4 And Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah, 5 And Ziklag, and Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah, 6 And Beth-lebaoth and Sharuhen; thirteen cities and their villages: 7 Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan; four cities and their villages: 8 And all the villages that [were] round about these cities, to Baalath-beer, Ramath of the south. This [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. 9 Out of the portion of the children of Judah, [was] the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.

10 And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun according to their families: and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid: 11 And their border went up towards the sea, and Maralah, and reached to Dabbasheth, and reached to the river that [is] before Jokneam; 12 And turned from Sarid eastward toward the sun-rising, unto the border of Chisloth-tabor, and then goeth out to Daberath, and goeth up to Japhia, 13 And from thence passeth on along on the east to Gittah-hepher, to Ittah-kazin, and goeth out to Remmon-methoar to Neah; 14 And the border compasseth it on the north side to Hannathon: and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthah-el: 15 And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Beth-lehem: twelve cities with their villages. 16 This [is] the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

17 [And] the fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families. 18 And their border was towards Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and Shunem. 19 And Haphraim, and Shion, and Anaharath, 20 And Rabith, and Kishion,

and Abez, 21 And Remeth, and En-gannim, and Enhaddan, and Beth-pazzez; 22 And the coast reacheth to Tabor, and Shahazimah, and Beth-shemesh; and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages. 23 This [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

24 And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. 25 And their border was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph, 26 And Alammelech, and Amad, and Misheal; and reacheth to Carmel westward, and to Shihor-libnath; 27 And turneth towards the sun-rising to Beth-dagon, and reacheth to Zebulun, and to the valley of Jiphthah-el toward the north side of Beth-emek, and Neiel, and goeth out to Cabul on the left hand, 28 And Hebron, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, [even] unto great Zidon; 29 And [then] the coast turneth to Ramah, and to the strong city Tyre; and the coast turneth to Hosah; and the outgoings thereof are at the sea from the coast to Achzib: 30 Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob: twenty and two cities with their villages. 31 This [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.

32 The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, [even] for the children of Naphtali according to their families. 33 And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaanannim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan: 34 And [then] the coast turneth westward to Aznoth-tabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sun-rising. 35 And the fenced cities [are] Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Chinnereth, 36 And Adamah, and Ramah, and Hazor, 37 And Kedesh, and Edrei, and En-hazor, 38 And Iron, and Migdal-el, Horem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh; nineteen cities with their villages. 39 This [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages.

40 [And] the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. 41 And the coast of their inheritance was Zorah, and Eshtaol, and Ir-shemesh, 42 And Shaalabbin, and Ajalon, and Jethlah, 43 And Elon, and Thimnathah, and Ekron, 44 And Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath, 45 And Jehud, and Bene-berak, and Gathrimmon, 46 And Me-jarkon, and Rakkon, with the border before Japho.

47 And the coast of the children of Dan went out [too little] for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father. 48 This [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

49 When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them: 50 According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked, [even] Timnah-serah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein. 51 These [are] the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country.

CHAPTER XX.

God commands the Israelites to appoint six cities of refuge.

1 THE LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying, 2 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: 3 That the slayer that killeth [any] person unawares [and] unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. 4 And when he that doth flee unto one of these cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. 5 And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime. 6 And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, [and] until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

7 And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which [is] Hebron, in the mountain of Judah. 8 And on the other side Jordan by Jericho east-ward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. 9 These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth [any] person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the revenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

CHAPTER XXI.

Eight and forty cities are given by lot out of the other tribes unto the Levites, and God gives them rest.

1 THEN, *after each tribe had their portion assigned them, and before they took possession of it,* came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites, unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel; 2 And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The LORD commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle. 3 And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their suburbs. 4 And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites: and the children of Aaron the priest, [which were] of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities. 5 And the rest of the children of Koath [had] by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities. 6 And the children of Gershon [had] by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities. 7 The children of Merari by their families [had] out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities. 8 And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities

with their suburbs, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

9 And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are [here] mentioned by name, 10 Which the children of Aaron, [being] of the families of the Kohathites, [who were] of the children of Levi, had: for theirs was the first lot. 11 And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which [city is] Hebron, in the hill [country] of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it. 12 But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession. 13 Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, [to be] a city of refuge for the slayer; and Libnah with her suburbs, 14 And Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs, 15 And Holon with her suburbs, and Debir with her suburbs, 16 And Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, [and] Beth-shemesh with her suburbs; nine cities out of those two tribes. 17 And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs, Geba with her suburbs, 18 Anathoth with her suburbs, and Almon with her suburbs; four cities. 19 All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, [were] thirteen cities with their suburbs.

20 And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim. 21 For they gave them Shechem with her suburbs in mount Ephraim, [to be] a city of refuge for the slayer; and Gezer with her suburbs, 22 And Kibzaim with her suburbs, and Beth-horon with her suburbs; four cities. 23 And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs, Gibbethon with her suburbs, Aijalon with her suburbs, 24 Gath-rimmon with her suburbs; four cities. 25 And out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with her suburbs, and Gath-rimmon with her suburbs; two cities. 26 All the cities [were] ten with their suburbs for the families of the children of Kohath that remained.

27 And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the [other] half tribe of Manasseh [they gave] Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, [to be] a city of refuge for the slayer; and Beeshterah with her suburbs; two cities. 28 And out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs, Dabareh with her suburbs, 29 Jarmuth with her suburbs, En-gannim with her suburbs; four cities. 30 And out of the tribe of Asher,

Mishal with her suburbs, Abdon with her suburbs, 31 Helkath with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs; four cities. 32 And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, [to be] a city of refuge for the slayer; and Hammoth-dor with her suburbs, and Kartan with her suburbs; three cities. 33 All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families [were] thirteen cities with their suburbs.

34 And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs, and Kartah with her suburbs, 35 Dimnah with her suburbs, Nahalal with her suburbs; four cities. 36 And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her suburbs, and Jahazah with her suburbs, 37 Kedemoth with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs; four cities. 38 And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, [to be] a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs, 39 Heshbon with her suburbs, Jazer with her suburbs; four cities in all. 40 So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites, were [by] their lot twelve cities. 41 All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel [were] forty and eight cities with their suburbs. 42 These cities were every one with their suburbs round about them: thus [were] all these cities.

43 And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. 44 And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45 There failed not aught of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

CHAPTER XXII.

After the account of dividing the land in the preceding chapters, we have here the dismission of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh; an account of the altar they built on their return, which gave offence to their brethren, who expostulate with them; they vindicate themselves, and all Israel is satisfied in this matter.

1 THEN Joshua called the Reubenites and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh; *then, when the promises of God were fulfilled, and the land was subdued and divided, Joshua disbanded them, and sent them home with due encouragement and commendation;* 2 And *he* said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you: 3 Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God: *he applauds their faithfulness and constancy, their bravery and steadiness, their obedience to Moses, and regard to God; and intimates, that they had behaved well in every respect.* 4 And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, [and] unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan; *sending them away, but, like a good man, with good advice; adding,* 5 But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. 6 So Joshua blessed them, *prayed God to bless them,* and sent them away, *probably with some presents, some particular tokens of his regard, as being of the same tribe, and descended from Joseph, their common father:* and they went unto their tents. 7 Now to the [one] half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given [possession] in Bashan: but unto the [other] half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them, 8 And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your

tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren *who are left at home, according to what God appointed, Numb.* xxxi. 27., *in a similar case; this was but a proper token of regard to their brethren, of gratitude to God for sparing their lives, and protecting their families during their absence.* 9 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which [is] in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

10 And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that [are] in the land of Canaan, *on the brink of the river,* the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to, *that is, high and conspicuous, that might be seen a great way off.*

11 And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar *in their own country,* over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel, *where the waters were miraculously divided.* 12 And when the children of Israel, *that is, the other tribes,* heard [of it,] the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them, *according to the command in Deuteronomy* xiii. 15. *It was natural to infer they would sacrifice on this altar, and whether to the true God, or any other, it was equally forbidden. It had an ill appearance; and however prudent their design was, they should first have consulted God or Joshua.* 13 And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, 14 And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel; and each one [was] an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel. *This was proper and prudent, as they were brethren, had behaved well, and shown great regard to Israel, and the God of Israel. They sent to inquire into the matter, a chief man from each tribe, to shew they were all unanimous; and Phinehas, the son of the high priest, who was eminent for piety and zeal, and well knew the law in this case, was probably the spokesman.* 15 And they came unto the

children of Reuben and to the children of Gad and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying, 16 Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass [is] this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD? *They accused them of a great trespass, and rebellion against God; committed on the very day when Joshua had just charged them, and they were returning in safety to their families: this was indeed rather too hasty, before they had inquired for what end the altar was built; but their fears were alarmed, lest God should be angry, as in former times; and therefore they add,* [Is] the iniquity of Peor too little for us, *the worship of Baal-peor, Numb.* xxv. 3, 4., *which brought a plague that destroyed twenty-four thousand; is it not enough that we provoked God to wrath then, but must we provoke him again now?* from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD, *the scandal of which still remained, or rather the infection of it and inclination to it.* 18 But that ye must turn away this day from following the LORD? and it will be, [seeing] ye rebel to-day against the LORD, that tomorrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel, *that is, very soon he will be wroth with you, and with all Israel for permitting it:* 19 Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession [be] unclean *for want of a tabernacle and an altar,* [then] pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the LORD, wherein the LORD's tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us; *a very fair and friendly proposal:* but rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar besides the altar of the LORD our God. *This expresses great zeal for God, and great pity and charity to their brethren. They only insist upon it that they do not rebel against God, and break the common bond by which they were all united to him and one another. To enforce this they add,* 20 Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity, *his family perished with him, and part of Israel before Ai. Thus, like good magistrates, they were solicitous to remove public vice, lest it should bring ruin on the nation.*

21 Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh *replied with a great deal of good sense, piety, and candour; and though the speech of their brethren was*

ill-grounded, they do not warmly resent it, but with all seriousness and mildness, they answered and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel, 22 The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if [it be] in rebellion, or if in transgression against the LORD, (save us not this day,) 23 That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the LORD himself require [it,] *that is, punish us for it. They appeal to God for this in the most solemn manner, mention his name with the highest reverence; he knows we had no such design and Israel shall know, that is, we will make our integrity appear to all our brethren, by our future carriage, that we had no such design as you charge us with. Then they explain the true reason;* 24 And if we have not [rather] done it for fear of [this] thing, *with the greatest anxiety lest any such thing should happen,* saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Israel? 25 For the LORD hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the LORD, *no right to serve him, or expect any favour from him:* so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the LORD, *that is, from making profession of his name, and worshipping him according to his will.* 26 Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice: 27 But [that] it [may be] a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the LORD, *that is, let it be a lasting monument to testify to succeeding ages that we have a true right in the same God and his worship with you.* 28 Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should [so] say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say [again,] Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it [is] a witness between us and you. 29 God forbid that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the LORD our God that [is] before his tabernacle. *Thus declaring in the strongest manner their utter abhorrence and detestation of any such design.*

30 And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which [were] with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them. *They neither questioned their sincerity, nor blamed their imprudence or rashness, but were fully satisfied with their apology.* 31 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben and to the children of Gad and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the LORD [is] among us, *with his gracious presence and favour,* because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD, *which would have brought down some heavy judgment upon us;* now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD, *that is, from his wrath, which would have been kindled against us had you committed the sin we suspected.* 32 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again. 33 And the thing pleased the children of Israel, *they all rejoiced in this happy event;* and the children of Israel blessed God, *that they had found no guilt in their brethren, and were freed from their fears, and from all the calamities of a civil war;* and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt. 34 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad, *to denote the intention of the altar, and prevent any future misconstruction,* called the altar [Ed,] *that is, a witness:* for it [shall be] a witness between us that the LORD [is] *that* God *which we own for our God, and will worship according to his own rule: thus the matter was amicably adjusted, to the content and joy of both sides.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE learn that fidelity to our promise, and steady obedience to God, are worthy of applause and commendation. For this Joshua commends the Reubenites and their neighbours. It is much for our honour and advantage to be constant and faithful in the discharge of our duty; and he that is so, is approved of God, and accepted with men.

2. Zeal for God's honour and the purity of his worship, becomes every true Israelite. Thus the nine tribes and a half,

though they had but just sheathed their swords and rested from the fatigues of war, determined to draw them again, and attack their brethren and associates, rather than God should be affronted or his worship corrupted. We, christians, are forbid to draw our swords against any of our brethren, who worship God in what we apprehend a wrong way; *the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual.* Yet it becomes us to take all prudent and christian methods to shew our zeal for God; but let it be founded in knowledge, and regulated by all prudence and tenderness.

3 The prudence of those tribes, in examining before they attacked their brethren, is worthy of our imitation. Solomon observes in all cases, *with good advice make war*, more especially against brethren. Wisdom should guide our zeal. Before we censure our brethren, we should inquire whether there is a cause; give them opportunities to explain themselves and their conduct. Most men are too ready to censure at random. A little prudence and inquiry would prevent innumerable mistakes and quarrels. Let us guard against rash censures, else our zeal for God will lead us from him, and we may be promoting Satan's cause, while we think we are doing God good service.

4. If we are ever so severely censured and reproached, let us put on meekness, and rule our own spirits; so these Reubenites did. Had they answered with reproaches and passion, perhaps it might have occasioned the loss of thousands of lives, and perpetual difference and contention between the tribes of Israel. *A soft answer turneth away wrath.* They did not bid the other tribes mind their own business, or give them an impertinent answer; but they explained the matter, and with all calmness vindicated themselves; a good example to us *when we are reviled, not to revile again.*

5. It is a very desirable thing to be able to appeal to God and man for the uprightness of our intentions and actions, when we are censured and condemned. There is something prodigiously affecting in the manner of the Reubenites' address; it carries all the marks of innocence and purity. It is no uncommon thing for those that erect another altar or place of worship to be censured and condemned, though they may keep close to God and not depart from him; they are often charged by violent bigots as schismatics and rebels. It is fit we should give a mild answer to such unjust censures. The Lord God of gods knows that we have not built or supported a church, to promote faction or party, to draw men from God and religion, but to lead them to him!

We hold communion with all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. And it should be our concern to let Israel know this; to let them see, by the purity of our worship and the regularity of our lives, and especially by christian charity to our differing brethren, that our principles are good, and our motives upright.

6. Good men, and especially pious parents, are greatly concerned and solicitous that religion may not be lost in their families. For this end the Reubenites built their altar, lest their children should forget God and lose religion. Therefore we should willingly contribute to the support of God's house; should take all precaution that our children may not cease from *following the Lord.* Every one that knows the benefit of religion, will be more solicitous about this, than securing estates for them.

7. It is the surest sign of God's presence with any people, when they are kept from sin, *v.* 24., preserved from those practices that bring the judgments of God upon them. When any of our brethren are found less blameable than we apprehended, when we see their constancy and zeal, let us consider it *as a token for good,* and give God the glory of it. Blessed be God who keeps us from sinning against him, who enables us to persevere in religion, and who, we hope, will make us *faithful even unto death.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

In this and the following chapter we have Joshua's farewell addresses to the people; and what he did, to promote and preserve religion among them when he was gone.

1 AND it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old [and] stricken in age. 2 And Joshua called for all Israel*, *that is, for their representatives,* [and] for their elders, *their great council or sanhedrim,* and for their heads, *that is, the princes of each tribe,* and for their judges, *inferior magistrates,* and for their officers, *who saw to the execution of the law,* and said unto them, I am old [and] stricken in age; *this may be*

* It is generally thought the place was Shiloh, where the ark was, and at one of the three great feasts, when all the males assembled there.

the last time I shall ever speak to you, 3 And *therefore I hope you will be peculiarly attentive;* ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God [is] he that hath fought for you; *first reminding them of what God had done, and then adding,* Behold I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward, *the Mediterranean sea.*

5 And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you; *though I die, and leave the work unfinished, yet God will be with you, and fulfil his promises if you do your part.* 6 Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom, [to] the right hand or [to] the left; *this is the condition on which God will be with you; and it will require great courage to expel the Canaanites, to refrain from commerce with them, and to keep all the law;* 7 That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, *lest such communications should corrupt your hearts;* nor cause to swear [by them,] *suffer not your children to swear by them, and let not your judges admit such oaths,* neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them, *give them no inward reverence, or outward adoration (Psalm* xvi. 4.*):* 8 But cleave unto the LORD your God, *with entire affection, constant worship, and faithful obedience,* as ye have done unto this day, *since ye came into Canaan.* 9 For the LORD hath driven, *or, then the Lord will drive,* out from before you, great nations and strong: but [as for] you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day; *and this is a pledge of what he will further do; therefore, however formidable your enemies may be, fear not, for* 10 One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he [it is] that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you. *But be not secure and careless, for you will have more temptations to forget God than you had in the wilderness, from your prosperity, and your wicked neighbours.* 11 Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God; *your whole happiness depends upon this care.*

12 Else if ye do in any wise go back *from God, desert his worship and service, and become friends,* and cleave unto the remnant

of these nations, [even] these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will *withdraw his assistance, and will* no more drive out [any of] these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, *they will lead you into sin, and you shall suffer for it, as much as a man who is punished by scourging, or who has a thorn run through his eye,* until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you, *which would be peculiarly grievous, after you have come to it through so many perils, obtained it by so many miracles, and are comfortably settled there, after many expectations and disappointments.* 14 And behold, this day I [am] going the way of all the earth, *and can bear my solemn testimony to God's faithfulness;* and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, [and] not one thing hath failed thereof. 15 Therefore it shall come to pass, [that] as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you, *the accomplishment of his promises is a pledge or assurance of the fulfilment of his threatenings.* 16 When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you; *ye shall be speedily and remarkably punished.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. IT is the duty of aged and dying christians to do what they can to engage the rising generation for God. What repeated pains did Joshua take! He used every argument, and put them in mind of his own experience of the goodness and faithfulness of God. Christ's old disciples should spend their last days in serving him, in propagating a sense of religion among those that they leave behind; they cannot spend them better. So Paul commanded Titus, *ch.* ii. 3., *to exhort and charge aged women to be teachers of good things.* It is the duty of christian fathers to

speak of the goodness of God; to let the world know the experience they have had of it, that *not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord their God spake concerning them.* This will encourage the young to hope and trust in God. The word of aged, experienced saints, is likely to make a lasting impression. Death is hastening on; therefore let them do what they can for God while they live, and remember, with the holy apostle, *as long as they are in this tabernacle to stir up all around them,* well knowing that they *must shortly put off this tabernacle.* 2 Peter i. 13, 14.

2. Religion, or the service of God, requires great care and watchfulness, in order to be steady and constant in it. Joshua plainly intimates this, when he exhorts Israel to be courageous, *to keep and do all that was written in the law of Moses; to take good heed to themselves.* They had many temptations to neglect it; they had a strange disinclination to it; and were ready to hearken to the solicitations of the Canaanites, who were enemies to God and religion. This is our case. Let us then put on resolution. Never does manly courage more become us, than when exerted in the cause of God and religion. Let us *keep our heart with all diligence*; watch all its secret workings and desires; take good heed to our souls, that they be furnished with useful knowledge, that our good habits be strengthened; and let us guard against those things that would debase, enslave and corrupt them. *Keep yourselves then in the love of God, and in patient waiting for Jesus Christ.*

3. Let us urge the experience we have had of God's goodness, as a powerful motive to induce others to serve and fear him. Joshua calls the Israelites to consider how kind and faithful God had been to them, as a motive to cleave to him. If we have any sense of decency and gratitude, it will make us ashamed to affront so kind a benefactor, to forsake a friend who has always been so generous and faithful to us; especially as our dependance on him is constant and necessary; we cannot do without him. And his threatenings are as sure as his promises. The punishment of disobedient children will be dreadful in proportion to the goodness of God to them, and the mercy he hath bestowed on them and their parents, and the promises of eternal happiness he hath given them on their obedience. Let all the grace of God's promises, and the terror of his threatenings, join to engage us *to cleave to him all our days. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, seeing he is faithful who hath promised.*

4 Let us frequently consider death as *the way of all the earth*, as the way in which we must go. This Joshua takes notice of to excite his own solicitude about the honour of God, and the welfare of his people, and to excite their care and attention. *It is appointed to all men once to die; there is no discharge in that war;* we are all going to our long home. Joshua, as great and good a man as he was, must go this way. Let us seriously think of this; and each say to ourselves, 'When a few years are come, perhaps a few days, *I must go the way of all the earth, the way whence I shall not return.*' Let this rouse our inactive spirits, quicken our languid zeal, and animate our endeavours to do good. We see our neighbours and acquaintance continually going this way, and we must soon follow. How suitable and important is Solomon's advice, *Eccles.* ix. 10., *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.*

CHAPTER XXIV.

Joshua had warned Israel in the last chapter, when he thought himself near death; he was now probably a little recruited, and in this chapter makes another attempt to fix them for God and religion, and takes a solemn farewell of them: he begins with an account of the great things God had done for them.

1 AND Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, *whither the ark was probably removed, because it was near to Joshua's abode,* and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. *Here the covenant was first made with Abraham, and with the people at Ebal and Gerizim, near to which Shechem lay.* 2 And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *language which shows that he spoke under a divine impulse; not only as a ruler but as a prophet*; Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood, *that is, in Mesopotamia, beyond Euphrates,* in old time, [even] Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods; *so that they had no reason to be proud of their ancestors; all done for them was from the free grace of God.* 3 And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, *appre-*

hended him by my grace, and snatched him out of that idolatrous and wicked place, and took him into acquaintance and covenant with myself, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, *to Shechem and then to Bethel,* and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. 4 And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it, *that I might leave Canaan entire for Jacob*; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. 5 I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out. 6 And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea. 7 And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season; *many of those were now living, who, when under twenty years of age came out of Egypt, but their fathers fell in the wilderness.* 8 And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you. 9 Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, *intended to make war, and in order thereto would first have them cursed,* and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: 10 But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand. 11 And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. 12 And I sent the hornet before you, *which terrified and stung them before they were attacked by you; and during the engagement these terrible creatures sunk their spirits, and made them an easy prey to you,* which drave them out from before you, [even] the two kings of the Amorites; [but] not with thy sword, nor with thy bow, *it was all owing to my power.* 13 And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat; *you had a good land and all desirable plenty without your own labour.*

14 Now therefore fear the LORD, *give him the inward reverence and homage of your souls,* and serve him in sincerity and

truth; *worship no other, and him only in the appointed way:* and, put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD; *banish all inclinations to idolatry out of your hearts, and cast away the idols if any remain which you had in the wilderness. As a prophet perhaps he saw some idols concealed among them, or an inclination turning that way; he therefore enters into a treaty with them.* 15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell, *not as if it were indifferent, but to convince them of the folly of a bad choice, and that they might be more free and willing in their right choice;* but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD; *though all of you should forsake God, though I should stand alone, I and my house will serve God. This bold and noble declaration, from such a venerable leader, in these affecting circumstances, so deeply impressed their minds, that they would not give him leave to proceed;* 16 And the people, *with great ardour,* answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; *this would be the greatest madness, we abhor the thought of apostacy.* 17 For the LORD our God, he [it is] that brought us up and our fathers out of theland of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in oursight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: 18 And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: [therefore] will we also serve the LORD; for he [is] our God. *We acknowledge the force of all these arguments; we will follow the example of our leader; we have so many incontestable proofs that Jehovah is our God, that we will never forsake him.* 19 And Joshua *made a remarkable reply, and* said unto the people, *If you retain your idols, either in your houses or hearts, and mingle false worship with true,* ye cannot serve the LORD*, *except you are fixed and fully resolved upon it beforehand; it is not a light matter, an hasty resolution will not do, you must count the cost; neither can ye serve the Lord, if you allow yourselves in any sinful course; and therefore consider well what you do,* for he [is] an holy God, *and will never endure a profane people, nor be satisfied with the bare profession of religion without the practice; and* he [is] a jealous God, *jealous of*

* Some would read it, *cease not to serve the Lord:* but our reading seems the best, *ye cannot serve the Lord.*

his honour, and will not admit of any rival; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins, *if you continue in them: he will punish you even more than others.* 20 If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, *the gods of your fathers, or of the Amorites,* then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. 21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD, *all that thou hast said shall not discourage us, for we are resolved to serve him only; nor shall we think the worse of him because he is an holy and a jealous God.* 22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye [are] witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him: *he strikes in with these good impressions, and adds, ye need no other witnesses but this word, this covenant, and your own consciences.* And they said, [We are] witnesses, *and shall be self-condemned if we make it not good:* 23 Now therefore put away, [said he,] the strange gods which [are] among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel, *since you have thus resolved and covenanted, be as good as your words.* 24 And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. *What a solemn and affecting engagement! Happy for Israel if they had always continued in the same mind.* 25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem, *made this a standing law for them and their posterity, that they should serve God only.* 26 And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, *on the original copy of the law that was laid up by the ark, to be a witness for God, if they forsook him, and to lay a greater obligation upon all the people;* and *he* took a great stone, *for a memorial of this solemn covenant,* and set it up there under an oak, that [was] by the sanctuary of the LORD, *that is, the tabernacle which was now brought thither,* (*ch.* xviii. 1.). 27 And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us: for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us, *it shall bring to your minds what was now done, as well as if it had heard, and could relate it to you again:* it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God, *forsake his pure worship, and fall into idolatry.* 28 So Joshua let the people depart every man unto his inheritance; *he dismissed the assembly, and took his final leave of Israel.*

29 And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, [being] an hundred and ten years old, *seventeen years after he came into Canaan, leaving*

a most honourable character that he had served the Lord faithfully, as Moses his predecessor had done. 30 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah*, which [is] in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. 31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel. *There was no public idolatry in their days; the elders were men of piety, zeal and resolution, and so far all things went well.*

32 And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, *near two hundred years after he had given commandment concerning his bones; (and it is probable the bones of the other patriarchs were buried here);* in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces, *or lambs,* of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph, *see Acts* vii. 16.

33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill [that pertaineth to] Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim, *by an extraordinary gift, that he might be near Joshua and the tabernacle, where he was to be resident, though others think he had it by right of his wife.—These last five verses were probably added by Samuel, or some other inspired historian; all the rest was written by Joshua himself.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WHILE we live let us do what we can for the honour of God, and the advancement of religion: Joshua did so. We should not desire a dismission from serving God and our generation, if he continues our capacity. The rising generation requires all our exhortation, care, and watchfulness. The words of aged, dying saints often make peculiar impressions; therefore living and dying let them bear their testimony to the truth and importance of religion, and labour to fix good impressions on those who are to come after them, that as one generation of serious christians passeth away, another may come.

2. It becomes us frequently to reflect on the appearances of

* *Timnath* signifies *the image of the sun*; the Jews suppose the image of the sun was on his tomb, as a remembrance of that great miracle, the sun standing still: this was usual among the ancients; a square was placed on the tomb of Archimedes.

God for us and our fathers; to remember what we have seen, *what we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us.* This will have a happy tendency to engage us to love and serve God. In this view, the historical part of the Old Testament, and this book of Joshua especially, is of great service to promote faith in God, and obedience to him. Let us remember and own the hand of God in these things; they were done in some good measure for us; let us therefore consider them as engagements to serve him in sincerity and truth.

3. Religion ought to be the matter of our serious and deliberate choice. It has reason on its side; it approves itself to our unbiassed judgments; and though there may be prejudices against it, and some objections, yet they will all appear groundless on due examination.

4. Singularity in real religion is highly commendable in itself, and may have a happy tendency to promote it in others. *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* The greatest men should not be above doing this; they should be distinguished by it. We must not forsake Christ, though all should; it will be the more for our honour to adhere to him; our steadiness and resolution may strike the minds of others, and may have the happy effect to conquer their prejudices and alter their pursuits.

5. Heads of families should resolve to do all they can to engage their houses *to serve the Lord.* They are committed to their care; they are accountable to God for what they do for them; they should therefore give all diligence to promote serious religion in their hearts, by their instructions, prayers, example, and authority.

6. It is a matter of great importance to bind ourselves by some solemn engagements to be the LORD's. After serious deliberation, we should *promise and vow:* every such act strengthens our resolution. Thus we shall all be witnesses against ourselves. Our baptismal engagements, the Lord's Supper, even the walls and the seats in which we have worshipped, as well as the bible and our fellow-christians, are witnesses against us if we forsake God. We shall be condemned by them all; *condemned out of our own mouths,* if we prove false to his covenant. It is *perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten:* and as we should dread the thought of God's forgetting his part, let us remember ours, and *be ever mindful of his covenant.*

7. Jesus Christ our ruler and high priest lives for ever, and this ought to be a great cause of rejoicing. Joshua the prince,

and Eleazar the priest, both died; and we shall find Israel soon revolting from God. But *Christ lives for ever, and has an unchangeable priesthood.* He is always with his church, to enliven, to guard, and direct it. Let us follow his guidance and submit to his direction; let us rely on his atonement and strength, for *he is able to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

THE BOOK OF

JUDGES.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS Book contains the history of the Israelites' church and commonwealth from Joshua's death to Eli: during which time, for the most part, it was governed by Judges; who were persons raised up by God in an extraordinary manner to execute his judgments, both in subduing, punishing, and destroying the wicked enemies of his church, and administering justice to his people according to his laws: wherein they were but God's deputies or lieutenants, employed by him in times of extremity, and were to lay down their authority when their work was done, as we see in Gideon's example. It is generally thought that Samuel was the author, as it was certainly written before the two books of Samuel; for 2 Sam. xi. 21. refers to some passages in the ninth chapter of this book; and probably before David's time, for Psalm lxviii. 7, 8, seems an allusion to the fifth of Judges and the fourth verse. It is divided into two parts: the first contains the history of the succession of judges from Joshua's death to Samson's chap. i—xvi., the rest contains an account of some remarkable events which happened about that time, but were not inserted in the history, lest the thread of it should be broken.

CHAPTER I.

In this chapter we have the acts of Judah and Simeon; Adoni-bezek justly requited; and of Jerusalem and Hebron being taken.

1 NOW after the death of Joshua, *some considerable time after, when they were multiplied and could people a larger tract of country,* it came to pass, that the children of Israel, *that is, the elders of Israel,* asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? *Joshua used to direct them, but now each tribe was a distinct government, and to prevent*

dispute or confusion they asked counsel from God at Shiloh; they did not inquire whether they should go, because God had commanded that, but who should go first. 2 And the LORD said, Judah shall go up; *not as the captain and leader of the rest, but because it was a numerous, valiant tribe, and the Canaanites were very powerful:* behold, I have delivered the land into his hand, *that part of it he now contends for.* 3 And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites: and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. *Each tribe was to fight for himself, but in difficult cases they engaged the help of their neighbours.* 4 And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in *and about* Bezek ten thousand men.

5 And they found Adoni-bezek, *that is, the lord or king of Bezek* in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes, *probably to disable him from war; upon which he made a remarkable confession:* 7 And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings, *petty princes or kings of cities or small territories,* having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered [their meat] under my table; *perhaps he used to send for them at some of his festivals, and make sport with them; and* as I have done, so God hath requited me, *I acknowledge his justice and my own guilt.* And they brought him to Jerusalem, *to strike terror into the inhabitants,* and there he died.

8 Now the children of Judah had *in Joshua's time (see Joshua* xv. 63.) fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire, *that is, all the upper city or fort of Zion which the Jebusites still held against them**. 9 And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley.

10 And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before [was] Kirjath-arba;) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talami, *under the conduct of Joshua and Caleb.* 11 And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before [was] Kir-

* Because the author of this history was here to relate the memorable exploits of the men of Judah, therefore together with those done after the death of Joshua, he repeats what were done by them in his life-time.

jath-sepher, *that is, the city of books, where there was a large library, and ancient records of all these nations; or, as some think, a university:* 12 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife, *thus giving some of his company an opportunity of signalizing themselves.* 13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife; *in this the hand of Providence appeared, as he was Caleb's nephew, and was afterwards to be a judge in Israel:* 14 And it came to pass, when she *left her father's house, and* came [to him,] that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off [her] ass; and Caleb, *perceiving what her design was,* said unto her, What wilt thou? 15 And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land, *which is dry and parched;* give me also springs of water, *some land where there are springs, and which will be more fruitful.* And Caleb gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs, *some lands with springs on both sides her former inheritance; but as Caleb had sons she could only enjoy these till the jubilee.*

16 And the children of the Kenite, *that is, Jethro,* Moses' father-in-law, *whom he invited into Canaan, Numb.* x. 29., *saying, Come with us, and we will do thee good, these* went up out of the city of palm trees, *the territories, hamlets, and villages belonging to Jericho,* with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, *a mountainous country adjoining to the tribe of Judah,* which [lieth] in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people, *it being a proper place for pasturage, and under the protection of Judah; and we read of them long after under the name of Rechabites, in the book of Jeremiah.*

17 And Judah went with Simeon his brother, *and thus requited his kindness,* (see ver. 3.), and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. 18 And the name of the city was called Hormah. Also Judah took Gaza with the coast thereof, and Askelon, with the coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof. *It was here the Philistines dwelt.* 19 And the LORD was with Judah; and he drave out [the inhabitants of] the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron, *with great scythes fixed on each side of them; and being discouraged by these chariots, and distrusting God, he suffered their enemies to prevail against them.* 20 And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak, (*Numb.* xiii. 22.)

21 And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day*.

22 And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Beth-el: and the LORD [was] with them. 23 And the house of Joseph sent to descry Beth-el. (Now the name of the city before [was] Luz.) 24 And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Show us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, *where we may most easily surprise it,* and we will show thee mercy. 25 And when he showed them the entrance into the city, they smote the city with the edge of the sword; but they let go the man and all his family. 26 And the man went into the land of the Hittites, *that is, the country to which the Hittites fled,* and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz†: which [is] the name thereof unto this day.

27 Neither did Manasseh, *that is, the half tribe which dwelt in Canaan,* drive out [the inhabitants of] Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. *After the death of Joshua they grew remiss in driving out the remainder of the Canaanites, but made peace with them, which was the first step of their defection.* 28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, *and could easily have driven them out,* that *yet, through cowardice or covetousness,* they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out. 29 Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. 30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them and became tributaries. 31 Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: 32 But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out, *and this was the source of all the miseries of Israel.* 33 Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless

* This city lay in two tribes; Judah drave them out from his part, but Benjamin did not, but suffered the Jebusites to hold the castle and fort till David's time.

† It is generally thought to be in Arabia, because there, as Josephus tells us, is a city of that name.

the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became tributaries unto them.

34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: 35 But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries. 36 And the coast of the Amorites [was] from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward*.

REFLECTIONS.

1. From the history of Adoni-bezek we learn the uncertainty of human greatness, and how easily God brings down pride. He had conquered seventy princes; at length he is conquered himself, and treated as he had used them. God is righteous; tyrants and oppressors are an abomination unto him; and their shame and ruin are generally more grievous, in proportion to the extent and greatness of their tyranny. Considering the surprising alteration in the circumstances of many princes, we have no reason to envy their condition; they are set in slippery places; and the meanest of their subjects, who are content with their lot are much happier persons.

2. The cheerfulness with which Caleb enlarged his daughter's portion, shames those parents who grudge their children a reasonable part of their possessions. When they are dutiful and obedient, every thing reasonable ought to be done to encourage them; otherwise they will be exposed to many temptations, which parents, for their own sake, as well as their children's, should endeavour to prevent.

3. How sad is it to see persons losing that comfort which they might enjoy, through a careless and negligent spirit. This was the case with the Israelites; they suffered the Canaanites to be among them, and by this they lost large tracts of good ground, and found them to be so many plagues and scourges to them. God sets blessings often before us, and is ready to help us if we will but exert ourselves; *the diligent hand maketh rich.* In spiritual

* We cannot be very exact in the situation of these places. Some cities are said to be taken several times; the Canaanites were driven out, and then probably returned; and thus there were continual struggles between them and the Israelites, for want of courage, and faith in the promises of God.

things it is so: God is ready to assist us against our enemies, and make us more than conquerors; but if we live at our ease, sink into sloth, and are terrified by every little difficulty, the consequence will be fatal; bad habits will be confirmed, we shall lose what we have at present, and, which will be far the worst of all, *shall fall short of the kingdom of heaven.*

CHAPTER II.

We have here a particular message sent to Israel by an angel, and the effect it had; (then follows a general summary of the whole book); their idolatry, their punishment, and their deliverance.

1 AND an angel* of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you, *if you break not with me by your apostacy and idolatry.* 2 And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice, *ye have broken your promise and the divine precept: he then expostulates with them, saying,* Why have ye done this, *and disobeyed so express a command?* 3 Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be [as thorns] in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. 4 And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept, *to think how greatly they had offended God, and to what judgments they were now liable: but there were few true penitents among them, as appears from what follows.* 5 And they called the name of that place Bochim, *that is, weepers:* and they sacrificed there unto the LORD, *to expiate their past sin, to regain the favour of God, and lay themselves under fresh obligations. As the death of Joshua and the elders made way for their revolt, these circumstances are repeated,* ver. 6—10.

* Some say this was a prophet, but I rather suppose it was an angel, such as usually appeared on any great occasion, and such as we read of afterwards in this book. The people were probably met at one of their great feasts; the angel appeared to come from Gilgal, to remind them of the covenant they had renewed there.

6 And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. 7 And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. 8 And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, [being] an hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash.

10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, *who had seen his wonders in Canaan, at Jordan and Jericho, and the sun standing still:* and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel, *who were spoiled by their plenty and peace, and had no such sensible experience of the goodness and power of God as their forefathers had, and so were not wrought upon truly to know and fear him.* 11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, *whose eyes were always upon them,* and served Baalim. 12 And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that [were] round about them, *the idols of the heathen,* and bowed themselves unto them, *publicly adored and worshipped them,* and provoked the LORD to anger. 13 And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth, *the sun, and moon, and all the gods and goddesses of their neighbours.*

14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, *carried away their persons and effects,* and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies; *he gave them over as the seller does the things bought to the hand of the buyer.* 15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. *God opposed all their undertakings, crossed all their enterprises, brought the mischiefs upon them threatened by Moses, and suffered their enemies to tyrannize over them with great cruelty.*

16 Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them, *some of whom continued in this office all their lives; others were raised up for some particular service, and then became private men again. God first brought them to repentance by their afflictions, and then raised up a*

deliverer. 17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, *who admonished them and probably punished them for their idolatry;* but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them, *broke their covenant engagements, and proved false to God:* they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; [but] they did not so, *and, as soon as the admonition or terror was gone, relapsed to their old sins, and were as bad as ever.* 18 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them, *and when they altered their course and became humble, God altered his methods of dealing with them.* 19 And it came to pass when the judge was dead, [that] they returned and corrupted [themselves] more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way, *but persisted in this wickedness, notwithstanding all that had been done to favour or punish them.*

20 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice, *and the repeated admonitions sent them by my prophets;* 21 I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died, *whatever attempts they may make, I will not assist them, as I have formerly done,* 22 That through them I may prove Israel, *try their faith and obedience,* whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep [it,] or not. 23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua; *he restrained Joshua from going on in his conquests, and left some of the old inhabitants among them, to see whether they would be proof against temptations to idolatry; otherwise they would be a punishment and torment to them, and God would be justified in all the judgments he should bring upon them.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE learn hence, that there may be sorrow for sin, and prayer to God, without reformation. The Israelites wept, and

sacrificed unto the LORD, and prayed over it, but immediately after rebelled, and grew worse than before. This is commonly seen among us; persons are melted under the word, impressed with a sense of sin, brought to tears of contrition, from the fear of hell or some general sense of having provoked God. They offer many prayers for forgiveness, and yet return to folly; grow as bad, or worse than before. But this is not that *godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation.* Let us, therefore, not think this sufficient. If the heart be truly broken for sin, it will be attended with a reformation of all that has been amiss. Let none deceive themselves; *he that doeth righteousness is righteous.*

2. The folly and presumption of the Israelites in turning to strange gods is very affecting, after all the miracles, warnings, and admonitions they had received. They had some little sense of decency while their judges lived, but no good principles. How strange was their stupidity in forsaking God and following idols! But such is the nature of sin; it hardens the hearts of men, and then, contrary to the remonstrances of God's word and the convictions of conscience, they run headlong into ruin. The more we have seen and known of God, the more solemnly we have professed to obey him, the greater will our shame and guilt be if we forsake him.

3. It is just in God to make those our torment and vexation, whom, by the neglect of our duty, we make our friends and associates. God commanded Israel to root out the Canaanites, and to avoid their society; but they would not hear; therefore God left them to scourge and tyrannize over them. Thus if men, instead of mortifying their lusts and subduing their corrupt passions, will indulge them, allow them to live, and to govern them, *God will give them up to their own hearts' lusts,* and they will suffer the dreadful consequences of their own neglect. God consults our ease and happiness in all his commands, and we must not expect either if we neglect his commandments. In like manner, if those who have been warned and admonished will be *the companions of fools,* the associates of wicked, worthless, idle men, they will certainly suffer by it, for they will become thorns in their eyes, wound them very sensibly and very deeply, and prove a dangerous snare to their souls. *Enter not, therefore, into the path of the wicked; he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*

4. The pity and kindness of God in raising up judges for Israel, is very remarkable and affecting. He raised them up

several judges, one after another, and did not suffer them to be quite overcome by their enemies. Those judges (though Israel grew weary of their government) were great blessings to their nation. Let us acknowledge God's goodness to us, a sinful people, in giving us wise and good princes and judges, to whom we owe it that our land is not over-run with idolatry and all manner of wickedness. Let us all show, by the sobriety, justice, and usefulness of our lives, that *we fear God* as well as *honour the king;* and that we are *subject, not for wrath,* or for fear of punishment, but *for conscience sake.*

CHAPTER III.

In this chapter we have an account of the enemies God left to prove Israel, and the mischief they occasioned; the deliverance of Israel from Chushan-rishathaim by Othniel, the first judge; and from the Moabites by Ehud; and the success of Shamgar over the Philistines.

1 NOW these [are] the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, [even] as many [of Israel] as had not known all the wars of Canaan; *that were born since the wars, and had not seen God's wonderful works in the conquest of Canaan.* 2 Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof, *that they might not be sluggish and inactive, but keep up a martial spirit, to secure their conquests, and drive out the rest of the Canaanites;* 3 [Namely,] five lords of the Philistines; *three of them had been conquered by Joshua,* (Joshua xiii. 3.), *but had recovered their country through the sloth of the Israelites*; and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath. 4 And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses; *that their virtue might appear in not imitating that people.*

5 And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites, *and became familiar with, and friendly to, them:* 6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to

their sons, and served their gods; *they formed alliances with them, contrary to the command of Moses,* Exodus xxxiv. 16. Deut. vii. 5., *and the consequence was, as Moses foretold, that they served their gods:* 7 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves. *They first forgot God, then left his worship, and at length served the gods of their neighbours in groves consecrated to them, which were a kind of family temples.*

8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, *a part of Syria which lay between the Tigris and Euphrates, and was Laban's country:* and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years, *and paid tribute to him. They then began to be weary of their yoke:* 9 And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, [even] Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, *of whom we read in Joshua* xv. 9., *so that it could not be long after Joshua's death before they corrupted themselves.* 10 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, *an impulse from God, to take upon him the government of the people, and lead them to battle, with extraordinary courage to vindicate their liberty, and eloquence to persuade the people to return to God;* and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim. 11 And the land had rest forty years, *or, to the fortieth year, that is, forty years after the first rest obtained for them by Joshua, the greatest part of which time was peaceable.* And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

12 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, *and this was a great aggravation of it, that it was so soon repeated:* and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. *He who stirred up judges, stirred up enemies, for the hearts of all men are in his hand.* 13 And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon, and Amalek, *his neighbours; Amalek was Israel's old enemy;* and *they* went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees, *a rich, fruitful vale, where Jericho once stood: here they set a garrison to cut off the communication between the Israelites and the two tribes and a half, to keep them in awe, and secure a retreat over the fords of Jordan.* 14 So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab

eighteen years: *Jabin oppressed them but eight years,* ver. 8., *Eglon eighteen; as their sins increased, so did their punishment.* 15 But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, *that tribe being immediately oppressed, and Jericho lying in it,* a man left-handed: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab, *perhaps the usual tribute, with some additional present, to conciliate his favour, and gain admittance.* 16 But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, *like a bayonet,* of a cubit length, *that is, about half a yard,* and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh, *that he might not be suspected, and the more easily draw it out.* 17 And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon [was] a very fat man, *and therefore less able to resist or defend himself.* 18 And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present, *he went part of the way with his company, who were not informed of his design.* 19 But he himself turned again from the quarries, *or graven images,* that [were] by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand, *something of consequence that I must deliver in private* unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him, *he would not suffer him to proceed till the servants were withdrawn.* 20 And Ehud came unto him, and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone, *a cool chamber, where he used to retire in the heat of the day for private business, or sleep, as is usual in hot countries.* And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee, *not from Jehovah, but God, which was a common name for the heathen deities, as some apprehend.* And he arose out of [his] seat, *to show his regard to the message.* 21 And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly*: 22 And the haft also went in after the blade, and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out†. 23 Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them, *he walked through the antechamber, where the guard used to stand, or the people to receive audience without any marks of fear, and they*

* It was surprising the guards should allow an enemy to be alone with the king; but supposing him unarmed and lame, they apprehended no danger.

† He died instantly, before he had time to cry out. Ehud might have an extraordinary impulse upon his mind to do this, and might be assured it was lawful and the will of God, and would succeed; but there are no such impulses now, and it is folly and madness to pretend to them.

suspected nothing. 24 When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour [were] locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber, *is laid down to sleep, at which time especially they covered their feet.* 25 And they tarried till they were ashamed, *could not tell what to say or think; fearing either to disturb him, or to be thought to neglect him; and they knocked,* and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took a key, and opened [them:] and, behold, their lord [was] fallen down dead on the earth. 26 And Ehûd escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath, *a plain in Ephraim, beyond the borders of Benjamin.* 27 And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them; *he led Israel on to the attack, while the Moabites were all in confusion.* 28 And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him and took the fords of Jordan towards Moab, *to prevent any escaping,* and suffered not a man to pass over, *to bring or carry intelligence.* 29 And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man, *all these were posted about Jericho, and were the chief of his forces, lusty, valiant men.* 30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years, *that is, to the end of the eightieth year after Othniel's death, as,* ver. 11.

31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel*.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE see in this chapter the benefit of afflictions, and the wisdom and goodness of God, in suffering enemies and evils to surround us, in order to promote and strengthen our virtue.

* This might probably be in Ehud's time; the Philistines might make an excursion in that part of the country where Shamgar lived; perhaps a spirit of courage and strength came upon him, as upon Othniel or Samson, and seizing his ox goad, which in those countries were near eight feet long, with a spike at one end to goad the ox, and a paddle or spade at the other to clear the plough, and falling on them he slew six hundred men; perhaps his servants assisted him; and others might join him, though this was the only instrument they had. Thus God can save by few as well as by many.

God proved Israel by their enemies; he brought them to repentance by sufferings; and then delivered them. Thus God deals with us; he sends tribulations to awaken us, to prevent our growing secure and careless (a temper destructive to every thing great and good); and to excite our repentance, and earnest cries to the Lord. Let us improve our afflictions to this purpose, or else God will punish us worse. The Israelites' first slavery was eight years, and then eighteen. So God will deal with us. If lighter afflictions do not mend us, he will send heavier, yet all with a merciful design.

2. Those whom God raises up for important service, he will qualify for, and succeed in, it. The Spirit came upon Othniel and Ehud, and gave them success, however unlikely the means were. It is the same to God to work by one instrument as another: thus *the weak things of God confound the mighty;* and in all these instances he secures the praise to himself.

3. The reverence with which Eglon rose to receive a message from a god, shames the irreverence of many christians. Though he was a king, in private, and unwieldy, though he was a proud, tyrannical oppressor, yet he rose to receive a message from a god, whom he knew not. It becomes us to receive messages from the true God, whom we profess to know and fear, with the greatest reverence of mind. The messages delivered to us from that God, are all kind and gracious, not intended to destroy, but to save us; and therefore carelessness and disregard are highly unbecoming and provoking to him.

4 God never wants instruments when he has work to do for his church and people. Shamgar was an honest farmer, at the plough, and had no thought of being employed to be the deliverer of Israel, till God called him; and then, with his ox goad he slew six hundred Philistines. The servants of God have no reason to fear in the darkest scenes, and amidst the greatest distresses, *for their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name.* He will some way or other plead his own cause, and defeat and destroy all his enemies; *happy,* therefore, *are the people whose God is the Lord.*

CHAPTER IV.

This chapter gives an account of the oppression of Israel by Jabin; of their deliverance by Deborah and Barak; and the death of Sisera, general of the host.

1 AND the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead. 2 And the LORD sold them, *that is, delivered them for slaves,* into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor, *in the northern parts of Canaan, where the people gathered together and put themselves under his government: the city had been destroyed, (see* Joshua xi. 10, 11.), *but it was now rebuilt and fortified. Jabin was a common name for their king,* the captain of whose host [was] Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles, *a place near to Hazor.* 3 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, *armed with scythes;* and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel, *laying them under a large tribute to support his forces, and showing great hatred to them because of their former victories*.*

4 And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth†, she judged Israel at that time; *being a woman of eminent holiness, prudence, and acquaintance with the law, she determined causes and controversies.* 5 And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah, *sat there to administer justice,* between Ramah and Beth-el in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. 6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, *so called to distinguish it from another city of that name; Barak had probably distinguished himself by some exploit,* and *she* said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded‡, [saying,] Go and draw towards mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? 7 And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon, *by my secret but powerful providence,*

* This was peculiarly grievous to Israel, because Harosheth was in the middle of the tribe of Naphtali; no wonder then they cried unto the Lord.

† Some think this was the name of her country, not of her husband, as no name of a man in Hebrew ends in *oth.*

‡ Perhaps in some vision, or by an angel appearing to her, see *chap.* v. 23.

Sisera the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand, *though thou hast but few and he has many, yet I assure thee of success; and his coming to Kishon, which river ran at the foot of Tabor, shall be a sign to confirm thy faith.* 8 And *yet it seemed to waver, for* Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, [then] I will not go; *he was unwilling to go without her presence, counsel, and prayers.* 9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh, *with heroic courage she went with him to his city to raise forces, and by her presence roused and animated his men.*

10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, *where he proclaimed God's intention and his own commission;* and he went up *to mount Tabor* with ten thousand men at his feet; *some from the other tribes joined him or followed him, but they were all foot soldiers, and a contemptible handful in comparison with Jabin's chariots and army:* and Deborah went up with him. 11 Now Heber the Kenite, [which was] of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which [is] by Kedesh; *which is mentioned here to make way for the story in the close of the chapter. They had removed from the wilderness of Judah, (see ch. i. 16.), for what reason does not appear, to the plain near Kedesh, where they dwelt in tents, under the protection of that city.* 12 And they *(not the Kenites, but some other persons)* showed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. 13 And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, [even] nine hundred chariots of iron*; and all the people that [were] with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon; *a vast multitude, with which they thought to surround, or shut up and starve, Barak and his men in the mountains: they never thought he would dare to come down and attack them in the plain.* 14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this [is] the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee, *as general, to fight for thee against thine enemies?* So Barak went down from mount Tabor,

* These chariots were armed with scythes at the axle-trees, which would make a prodigious slaughter among the footmen. They were used among the ancient Britons.

and ten thousand men after him, *strong in faith, and trusting in God; therefore the apostle celebrates him,* Heb. xi. 32. 15 And the LORD discomfited Sisera, *probably with thunder, lightning, hail-stones, and the like, as appears from the next chapter,* and all [his] chariots, and all [his] host with the edge of the sword, before Barak; *they were broken and dispersed, trampled upon by their own horses, and cut to pieces by their own chariots;* so that Sisera lighted down off [his] chariot, and fled away on his feet. 16 But Barak pursued after the chariots and after the host unto Harosheth of the Gentiles, *to the very gates of their own city;* and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; [and] there was not a man left *in the field, to make resistance; and so complete was the victory, that the Psalmist, when praying against the enemies of the church, refers to it, Psalm* lxxxiii. 9, 10.

17 Howbeit, Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite. *Heber's was a considerable family like Abraham's; the women had tents for themselves, and Sisera thought no search would be made for him there:* for [there was] peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite, *a cessation of hostility, because they were a peaceable people, and laid no claim to the land, being only sojourners.* 18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not; *standing at her tent-door, she saw him flying, and invited him in, and at that time probably had no intention of doing him an injury.* And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle, *a rug or blanket, to conceal him.* 19 And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk *with the cream on it, or butter, as appears* chap. v. 25., and gave him drink, and covered him, *which shewed her respect, and increased his confidence in her.* 20 Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No; *she did not promise this, and seeing him fast asleep, a sudden thought darted into her mind, that she had a fair opportunity of avenging Israel, of rewarding their kindness to her and her ancestors, and destroying a tyrannical oppressor; and she did so.* 21 Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, *a stake or spike by which the tent was fastened to the ground, perhaps pointed with iron,* and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast aleep

and weary. So he died. *This was an evident breach of the laws of hospitality, and an action not to be imitated by us; how far she was to be excused in the sight of God, by some secret impulse on her mind, he is the only judge.* 22 And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her [tent,] behold Sisera lay dead, and the nail [was] in his temples. *Thus he saw Deborah's prophecy,* v. 9., *fulfilled, and that Sisera fell by the hand of a woman.* 23 So God subdued on that day, Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel, *who pursued their victory.* 24 And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan *and his forces, his people and city, which was the utter ruin of his kingdom: so that we no more hear of any king of Canaan, nor were they able to oppress Israel any more.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. The corruption of Israel during the long peace they enjoyed, should be a caution to us. They had rest sixty years; but abused their peace, forgot God, and grew proud and wanton. Let us fear lest this should be our case; and be careful, lest our peace and plenty make us thoughtless and giddy, and lead us to neglect God and our duty; if it does so, we must expect he will raise us up troubles and enemies; we shall forfeit his protection and care, and expose ourselves to every evil and danger. Let us pray, that *when the church has rest it may be edified.*

2. How easily can God disappoint men in those very things in which they place their confidence? What a figure does Sisera make with nine hundred chariots, and as Josephus says, three hundred thousand horsemen! Undoubtedly, he looked with contempt on the poor Israelites, because they were on foot: but he was glad to fly on foot himself, after he had seen the destruction of his forces. Thus can God, with infinite ease, disappoint those hopes which are formed without him and contrary to his will; nay, who ever trusted in any earthly thing without disappointment? What a figure, on the other hand, does this mighty general make in Jael's tent, when nailed to the ground! *the stout-hearted fall into a deep everlasting sleep;* he dies, in this contemptible manner, by the hand of a woman. What an affecting lesson of the vanity

of human greatness, and the uncertainty of human life! Danger is often near, when least expected, and where we imagine the greatest security to be; *let not the strong man glory in his strength.*

3. When we are engaged in work pleasing to God, we should be courageous and cheerful. *Up,* says Deborah, *is not the Lord gone out before thee?* If we have a divine warrant for what we do, we need not be afraid of any enemy nor any danger. *Greater is he that is with us, than all those who are against us.* Let us adhere to God and our duty, and pursue it with the greatest zeal; and may his promise animate us to resolution and despatch in all the work we have to do, especially in the work of religion; then may we boldly say, *The Lord is our helper, therefore will we not fear.*

CHAP. V. 1—18.

This chapter contains the song of Deborah, one of the finest pieces of poetry any where to be found. It was then usual to celebrate victories by triumphant songs, to engage attention, to help the memory, and to convey instruction. This opens with beautiful grandeur.

1 THEN sang Deborah and Barak* the son of Abinoam on that day, saying, 2 Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, *punishing their enemies for all the wrong they have done to them,* when the people willingly offered themselves, *cheerfully came together to some grand festival to celebrate this victory, and give God the glory of it.* 3 Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes, *and know that the God of Israel is superior to your idols, and able to deliver and defend his people;* I, [even] I, will sing unto the LORD; I will sing [praise] to the LORD God of Israel. 4 LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, *then thou didst great wonders, destroyedst Sihon and Og; then* the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water; *a poetical phrase to express the great consternation they were in. She then mentions a more ancient appearance of God at Sinai, when,* 5 The mountains melted from before the LORD, [even] that Sinai from before the

* Deborah the prophetess composed the song, and Barak, as chief commander, ordered it to be sung in the assembly of the elders, and afterwards to be dispersed among the people.

LORD God of Israel. *The following verses describe the melancholy condition they were in before this time;* 6 In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways; *there was no trading or travelling by reason of Jabin's forces, who robbed and plundered all they met.* 7 [The inhabitants of] the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, *were obliged to fly to fortified towns, and leave the ground uncultivated,* until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel, *a prophetess, to instruct and take care of them with a tender affection.* 8 They chose new gods; then [was] war in the gates, *the enemy pursued them to the very gates, and put a stop to the courts of justice which were held there:* was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel? *They were either disarmed, as* 1 *Sam.* xiii. 19—22., *or they were so dispirited as not to use them.* 9 My heart [is] towards the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people; *I feel great esteem for the chief leaders of Zebulun and Naphtali, who by their example animated others.* Bless ye the LORD, *who excited them to do so.* 10 Speak, ye that ride on white asses, *governors and persons of rank, who rode on beautiful asses, which were large, handsome, and valuable creatures, and* ye that sit in judgment, *judges who sit in the gate,* and *merchants and travellers who* walk by the way; *let the highest and the lowest of the people, who all dwell now in safety, speak to the Lord, and speak to one another of his wondrous works.* 11 [They that are delivered] from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, *shepherds, who could not water their flocks without showers of arrows from enemies hid in the rocks or thickets;* there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD [even] the righteous acts [towards the inhabitants] of his villages in Israel, *not the acts of Deborah or Barak, but of Jehovah, the author of all:* then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates; *were justice, equity and regularity are maintained, they shall go out and come in without danger.* 12 Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song; *she stirs up herself to celebrate this great deliverance with all her powers, and calls upon Barak, saying,* arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam, *thou who hast led those captive to the house of God, where this victory was celebrated, who had led Israel captive.* 13 Then he made him that remaineth, *the small remains of oppressed Israel, to* have dominion over the nobles among the people, *the heathen their adversaries;* the LORD made me have

dominion over the mighty; *she assisted by her counsel and encouragement, and therefore shared in the honours and triumph of the day. She then proceeds to mention the parties concerned.* 14 Out of Ephraim [was there] a root of them against Amalek; *a small party of Ephraimites cut off a large party of Amalekites, who were going to assist Sisera;* after thee, Benjamin, among thy people, *shall be celebrated for their numbers, zeal, and readiness in this business*; out of Machir came down governors, *that is, out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Machir being one of his sons, there came such as were magistrates in their country, and commanders in the army,* and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer, *studious persons, who, though never bred up to military employment yet now betook themselves to their arms.* 15 And the princes of Issachar [were] with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak: he was sent on foot into the valley, *their princes and people went with Barak on foot into the valley, to attack the horses and chariots, and exposed themselves to great hazards.* For the divisions of Reuben, *their differences among themselves, so that they could not agree to join together and assist their brethren against the common enemy,* [there were] great thoughts of heart, *sad trouble of mind among the Israelites, to see themselves deserted by so great and potent a tribe as Reuben was.* 16 Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? *They were more affected by the bleatings of the flocks than the groanings and complaints of their brethren; pretending to take care of their cattle lest they should be plundered: a poor excuse in such a case*: for the divisions of Reuben [there were] great searchings of heart, *many inquiries what could be the reason; great concern to see their brethren so divided, and such a number more anxious about their beasts than their religion and liberty.* 17 Gilead abode beyond Jordan, *that is, the other half tribe of Manasseh, and thought they had no concern in the matter;* and why did Dan remain in ships, *minding their merchandise and not helping their brethren?* Asher continued on the sea-shore, and abode in his breaches, *or creeks, more concerned about their private affairs than the public good.* 18 Zebulun and Naphtali [were] a people [that] jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field, *that is, in mount Tabor: these tribes were most oppressed, and most active and unanimous; they feared neither danger nor reproach, and though but a few, ventured their lives and their fortunes against this great army. Nothing is said of Judah and Simeon, as they lay too far south to come.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. We may learn hence, how reasonable and proper it is to celebrate God's praises, when he has wrought out deliverance for us. The design of the whole of this composition is to magnify the God of Israel, and to keep up the remembrance of his wonderful works. Our hearts should always be in tune for this, as he is every day doing us good; and particularly when he hath appeared for us in an extraordinary manner; we should then *praise him with our whole heart. Awake up, my glory,* says David. We should call upon our souls, and all that is within us, to join in this important, necessary, and delightful work. Especially should we praise God for our national peace. The description of Israel's calamity, when under oppression, should make us thankful that it is not ours, that *we have peace in all our borders*, that we enjoy our civil and religious liberties, and that our enemies have been again and again vanquished by us. On these accounts we should *call on our souls to bless the Lord, and not forget any of his benefits.* We should frequently rehearse these mighty acts of the Lord, and give praise to the God of Israel. Former and later deliverances claim our regard. To these we owe it that our merchants and tradesmen pursue their occupations in safety, that the high road is occupied, that our villages flourish, and enjoy the fruit of honest labour without fear; especially that *we can go up to the house of the Lord, to see his beauty, and to inquire in his temple.* Let us take care to keep up the memory of God's great goodness; think of former appearances, and favours of later date; and *tell the generation to come, that they also may know the righteousness of the Lord.*

2. Divisions, and indifference to good and public services, are very unbecoming true Israelites, and grievous to every pious and generous mind. This was the case with the Reubenites and the other tribes; their affections were alienated from their brethren; they had lost their zeal for God, and concern for the public interest: a case that too commonly occurs. *Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold.* The love of ease, the fear of trouble, too great a regard to the interests of this world, the care of their estates, or of their flocks, engage men's attention, and indispose them for active services in God's cause and honour. Many do not care what becomes of the church of God, if they can but get

money and live at ease. It is melancholy to see men, who are bound by the same ties, and ought to pursue the same common interest, so divided among themselves, as rather to suffer the common enemy of religion to triumph, and unite together in a noble defence. This is often the case in public affairs; and also in christian societies; yea, in concerns of such importance, as ought to banish entirely every distinguishing name, and animate all to zeal and activity. When these cases happen, they make a generous impression on the minds of godly men. Every sincere heart is grieved at the lukewarmness and indifference of his fellow-christians. Let us guard against these things, cultivate a generous public spirit, be willing to give up our own trifling concerns for the interest of God's church and people, and join hearts and hands to promote it.

CHAP. V. 19, to the end.

In which Deborah celebrates the victory itself, and ascribes all the praise to God; she then describes the destruction of Sisera, and the disappointment of his friends, in a very poetical and beautiful manner; and concludes the chapter as much like a prophetess as a poet, with a devout wish and prayer addressed to Jehovah.

1 THE kings came [and] fought, *they were more ready to assist one another than the tribes of Israel were,* then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money, *they came not out of a mercenary disposition, but out of friendship to one another, and enmity to God's people, a vast army that filled the country and reached to the waters of Megiddo.* 20 They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera, *Jehovah was on Israel's side; dreadful meteors, fierce flashes of lightning, impetuous storms of hail and rain, affrighted the enemies' horses, overthrew their chariots, and turned them against Sisera.* 21 The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon, *swelled by the rains prevented their flight, or swept many away who were wounded in battle:* O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength; *probably alluding to the prayer she had offered in the time of action, which had the same effect as the lifting up of Moses' hands in the war with Amalek.* 22 Then were

the horse hoofs broken by the means of the prancings, *tramplings, or plungings among the stones,* the prancings of their mighty ones, *their best horses, who threw their riders and left them a prey to Israel's sword. In the midst of this description of the victory she introduces a solemn execration.* 23 Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty*. 24 Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent, *she shall be highly extolled and applauded, and many blessings wished to her by all Israel for what she did in the tent.* 25 He asked water, [and] she gave [him] milk, *that he might not suspect her design;* she brought forth butter in a lordly dish, *or bowl suitable to his dignity.* 26 She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head *with his own sword,* when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. 27 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead; *an elegant description of a man who has received a mortal wound; at the first stroke he attempted to rise, but being stunned, he bowed, he fell, he lay down: he struggled, he fell, he died.* 28 The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, *sure of his success and impatient at his delay,* Why [is] his chariot [so] long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? *She thought it would be an easy conquest, and wondered what could detain him so long.* 29 Her wise ladies answered her, *and endeavoured to cheer her spirits,* yea, she returned answer to herself, *her hopes got the better of her fears, and she said,* 30 Have they not sped? have they [not] divided the prey? *they have surely obtained the victory, and so cannot come so soon, but must have some time allowed to divide the spoil;* to every man a damsel [or] two; to Sisera, a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers colours of needle-work on both sides, [meet] for the necks of [them that take] the spoil? *Only fit for great persons, and by the ancient laws restrained to them; spoils and presents fit for her and her wise ladies.* 31 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD, *so suddenly, effectually, shamefully, and irrecoverably*: but [let] them that love

* Meroz was probably a large city near the field of battle; the inhabitants would not assist Israel in the action or pursuit, though it was a common cause, and undertaken by divine commission; therefore the angel who commanded her to commission Barak, ordered her to curse Meroz; which place dwindled and perished under the curse of God; for we do not read of it any more.

him [be] as the sun when he goeth forth in his might; *let them increase in lustre, power, and force, like the sun going forth to its meridian strength and brightness.* And the land had rest forty years, *that is, from the conquest of Jabin*.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. We observed in the last chapter the vanity of self-confidence, in the case of Sisera. It may be useful here to reflect on the vanity of trusting to others, or expecting too much from them, as illustrated in the circumstances of his mother. She was confident he would be successful, return home with wealth and honour, and enrich his friends and relations; but her hope was turned into shame, and her confidence into disappointment. And so it may be with us, if we expect too much from man. *The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* It is a good thing to guard against confidence, even in the wisest and most potent of the children of men. But God is a being in whom we may confide, every way equal to our wishes and expectations; he will never disappoint us. *Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.* Let us also rejoice and trust in Christ Jesus; *he is the captain of our salvation.* He will come again victorious, *to be admired in his saints,* to enrich and reward all his faithful servants. Towards his second appearance may we direct our believing thoughts, and say, *Why are his chariots so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?*

2. The enemies of God have reason to tremble, and all his friends to rejoice; this was Deborah's conclusion, *let it be so,* that is, it shall be so. The prayer of a prophet is the prediction of heaven. All the enemies of God's church, however powerful and terrible, shall be destroyed, and we may without a revengeful disposition pray that their schemes may be disappointed, and their counsels baffled. It is peculiarly proper to do this when celebrating former deliverances; let all the enemies of God's church be like those, from whose power and hand God hath often delivered the British church and nation. But let all his friends rejoice; for *they shall be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.* All that love God, that seek him, and serve his interest,

* Thus concludes this charming composition; and, we may add, in the words of an ancient commentator, 'Let Homer and Virgil go now and compare their poetry with this song of a woman.'

shall appear great and illustrious in the sight of the world; they shall be growing in lustre, and *their path shall be like the shining light*. And after they have served God and their generation in this world, *they shall for ever shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*.

CHAPTER VI.

This chapter contains an account of Israel's fourth oppression by the Midianites, and of their deliverance by Gideon, the fourth of their judges.

1 AND the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD; *after the death of Deborah and Barak they fell into idolatry*, (see ver. 10.), and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years*. 2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: [and] because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which [are] in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds, *to secure themselves, their families, and cattle from being plundered by them*. 3 And [so] it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, *probably Arabians*, even they came up against them, *when the harvest was nearly ripe;* 4 And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. 5 For they came up with their cattle, and their tents† and they came as grasshoppers, *or locusts*, for multitude; [for] both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. 6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites *and their confederates, being obliged to part with their money to buy corn;* and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

7 And it came to pass when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, 8 That the LORD sent a

* These were a contemptible people who had no head; they were almost entirely destroyed about two hundred years before, see Numb. xxxi. Though descended from Abraham, they were great enemies to Israel, and full of revenge.

† The Arabians especially did so; they lived in tents, and removed from place to place for pasture, till they had eat up the country, and then removed. These came up like locusts for multitude, and destroyed every thing before them.

prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, *probably when gathered together at some of their public festivals,* Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; 9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians *who pursued you,* and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, *even the Canaanites,* and gave you their land; 10 And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell, *do not serve them, or through fear be tempted to worship them:* but ye have not obeyed my voice. *He probably said much more, but this was the substance, and it had a good effect; the people humbled themselves and repented, and God appeared for them.*

11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which [was] in Ophrah, that [pertained] unto Joash the Abiezrite; *he appeared in the form of a weary traveller, sitting under an oak belonging to Joash, who was a worshipper of Baal:* and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the wine press, to hide [it] from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD [is] with thee, thou mighty man of valour. *Gideon perhaps was thinking of the oppression of Israel, revolving in his mind what to do to deliver them, and the angel assured him of God's presence and help.* 13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where [be] all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites; *our melancholy condition shows that God is not with us.* 14 And the LORD looked upon him; *that is, the angel, God's representative, looked upon him in a powerful, efficacious manner, so as to inspire him with courage, and endow him with authority* and said, Go, in this thy might, *now bestowed upon thee,* and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? *have I not given thee commission? therefore make no excuses nor delays.* 15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family [is] poor in Manasseh, and I [am] the least in my father's house; *with great modesty and diffidence declining the commission, his family or thousands, that is, his tribe, being poor, and he having no means to raise forces.*

16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man, *destroy them to a man, as he did,* chap. viii.

17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me, *that is, by authority from God; and that I may be assured it is a divine commission: a reasonable and proper request.* 18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set [it,] *a meat offering*, before thee, *as Abraham and Lot did: and the angel condescended to his request*, and he said, I will tarry until thou come again. 19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought [it] out unto him under the oak, and presented [it] *as a token of respect, and to accommodate him in his journey, as he still took him to be only a prophet.* 20 And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay [them] upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so, *however strange the order might appear he obeyed.* 21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that [was] in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight, *ascended in the smoke thereof.* 22 And when Gideon perceived that he [was] an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face. *These are evidently the words of a man quite surprised: so Jacob and Manoah expressed themselves.* 23 And the LORD said unto him, *in an audible voice*, Peace [be] unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die, *I am still with thee, fear no harm but expect all good and success.* 24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom, *that is, the Lord send peace:* unto this day it [is] yet in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites. *It was not built for sacrifice, but as a memorial of this vision, and of God's speaking peace to him and his people; and it continued till the time this book was written.*

25 And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, *in a dream or vision*, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, *which was set apart to be sacrificed to Baal in the second place*, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath *built for public use*, and cut down the grove that [is] by it, *where the image was placed:* 26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, *where the angel appeared*, in the ordered place, *or in an orderly manner, as Moses commanded*, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou

shalt cut down; *a very extraordinary command, as Gideon was no priest.* 27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, *faithful men in whom he could confide,* and did as the LORD had said unto him: and [so] it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do [it] by day, that he did [it] by night, *lest a tumult should be raised, and hinder him from doing it; this showed great faith and courage, and was a bold undertaking.*

28 And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, *and came to worship, before they went to their work,* behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that [was] by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar [that was] built, *the flesh of it was not quite consumed.* And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired, and asked, they said, Gideon, the son of Joash hath done this thing; *they knew he was an enemy to their idolatry, and therefore suspected him first.* 30 Then the men of the city said unto Joash, *who was the chief magistrate there,* Bring out thy son, that he may die *without any trial:* because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that [was] by it. *It is probable that Gideon had before this, informed his father of his commission, which convinced him of his mistake, as appears in the next verse.* 31 And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? *it is none of your business to inflict punishments for crimes;* he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst [it is yet] morning, *he who will plead for such a God as this, for worshipping whom ye now suffer such calamities, deserves to die instantly:* if he [be] a god, let him plead for himself, because [one] hath cast down his altar; *he probably said a great deal more, but this was the substance of it.* 32 Therefore, on that day he, *that is Joash,* called him, *that is Gideon,* Jerubbaal, *or, Baal's adversary,* saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar; *let Baal look to himself and do his worst.*

33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over *Jordan* and pitched in the valley of Jezreel, *as they were used to do every year, in order to ravage and eat up the produce of the country.* 34 But the spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, *a spirit of wisdom, courage, and zeal;* and he blew a trumpet; and Abi-ezer was gathered after him. 35 And he sent messages throughout all Manasseh, who also was gathered after him; and he sent mes-

sengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. *God stirred up their hearts to come to him.*

36 And Gideon, *who wanted to know whether this was the proper time, and to convince the assembled Israelites of his divine commission,* said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, 37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; [and] if the dew be on the fleece only, and [it be] dry upon all the earth [besides,] then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. 38 And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. 39 And Gideon, *to convince Israel that this was a real sign from God, desired it might be inverted, but as this might look like diffidence, he made an humble apology, and* said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. 40 And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

REFLECTIONS.

1. A GENEROUS solicitude, for the good of others, is highly becoming a true Israelite. Gideon's head and heart were full of concern for oppressed Israel, and therefore the angel saluted him. He put himself among the rest, *if the Lord be with us.* He had no comfort while Israel was in sorrow; he was chiefly concerned for the public interest, and could take no satisfaction in any message, while Israel was oppressed. Let us thus cultivate a concern for the public good, and esteem the welfare of Jerusalem as *our chief joy.*

2. Those that would promote reformation, must begin at home. This is God's direction to Gideon; to take down his family altar; for others would not regard his remonstrances while Joash's altar stood; this is a good model for parents, masters, and ministers. Would they make their children, servants and people, wise and good, let them be cautious and watchful, and remove every thing that would be a reproach to them. Would we be rid of affliction, and serviceable to others, let us consider what idolatrous altars and groves are in our hearts and houses, and down with them; and then we may exhort others with a good grace, and hope for success.

3. We here see the great condescension of God to the weakness of his servants. The angel, instead of chiding Gideon for his doubts and fears, looked favourably upon him, gave him another and another sign, comforted his terrified heart, and strengthened his weak faith. Thus graciously does God deal with his servants; *he breaks not the bruised reed*, but pities their infirmities, and takes a variety of methods to give the heirs of promise strong consolation. But while we have such encouragements let *us not tempt the Lord our God*, but say, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*

CHAPTER VII.

Gideon's army is reduced by the divine command; a further intimation of success is given to confirm his faith; and the Midianites are attacked and defeated.

1 THEN, *next morning after the miracle*, Jerubbaal, who [is] Gideon, and all the people that [were] with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. 2 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that [are] with thee [are] too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. *The Midianites were four times as many as the Israelites, who therefore would have had no reason to glory in themselves; had they conquered with all their forces, it would even then have been evidently a miracle; but God knowing their proneness to boast in themselves, ordered their number to be lessened.* 3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, *according to the law of Moses, Deut.* xx. 8., saying, Whosoever [is] fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead*. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand *only, to venture their lives.* 4 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people [are] yet [too] many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, [that] of whom

* A mountain so called in honour of Gilead their common father, or in token of their alliance with the half tribe on the other side Jordan who possessed Gilead.

I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go; *that is, I will give thee a sign whereby thou mayest discover who they be that are indeed fit for this service.* 5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, *who takes a little water in his hand, sips, and hastens away,* him shalt thou set by himself, *and* likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink, *which denoted sloth and delay in this great work.* 6 And the number of them that lapped, [putting] their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. 7 And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place. *Thus many were called, but few were chosen.* 8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all [the rest of] Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

9 And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand, *of which I will now give thee another* sign. 10 But if thou fear to go down *alone,* go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host; *though one will be enough, as it is a secret expedition;* 11 And thou shalt hear what they say, and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that [were] in the host. 12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; *they were near an hundred and forty thousand, for one hundred and twenty thousand were slain at one time;* and their camels [were] without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. 13 And when Gideon was come, behold, [there was] a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread, *baked in the ashes in haste,* tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, *the general's tent,* and smote it that it fell, and overturned it that the tent lay along, *shattered it so, that it could not be raised again.* 14 And his fellow answered and said, This [is] nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man

of Israel: [for] into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host: *a far-fetched interpretation, which Gideon would not have discovered, had it not been for this explanation; but it showed the fear and terror of the Midianites, and strengthened Gideon's faith: it gave him no offence to be compared to a barley cake, when he heard what he was to do.* 15 And it was [so,] when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, *bowed down in thankful acknowledgment of the goodness of God,* and returned into the host of Israel, and said, *without fear or delay,* Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.

16 And he divided the three hundred men [into] three companies, *to make as great a show as he could, and to attack them in several places at once;* and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, *(Josephus says, rams' horns)* with empty pitchers, and lamps, *or torches,* within the pitchers, *to conceal them from the enemy:* 17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be [that,] as I do, so shall ye do. 18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that [are] with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, [The sword] of the LORD, and of Gideon. *God was to be named first, to show that their dependance was upon him, and Gideon only mentioned as his instrument, and because his name was terrible to the enemy.* 19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that [were] with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, *about midnight:* and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that [were] in their hands, *perhaps one against another.* 20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow [withal:] and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. 21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp, *that is, Gideon's three companies, breaking their pitchers, waving their torches, blowing their trumpets, and shouting;* and all the host ran, and cried, and fled, *supposing themselves surrounded with a vast army, and that even when they were in the camp.* 22 And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host, *in their confusion and terror they fell upon one another;* and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, [and] to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath. 23 And the men of Israel *had*

gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and *lying ready for the event, they* pursued after the Midianites.

24 And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. *Though he and his three hundred men routed their enemies, yet the assistance of others was needful to complete the victory.* 25 And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb, *these names signify the raven and the wolf;* and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of Zeeb, *the rock and the wine-press were called after their names,* and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan, *after he had passed over.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. We see how careful God is to hide pride from man. He knows the pride of man's heart, and conducts his deliverances in such a manner, as to show his own hand. *He will not give his glory to another.* None shall say, *My own hand hath saved me;* all is of grace, and the design of all is, that *he that glorieth may glory in the Lord.*

2. We have here another instance by what weak instruments God often chooses to bring about his purposes, and therefore *we must not despise the day of small things. It is all one to him to work by few as by many.* So he did in planting the gospel, as was foretold in allusion to this story, Isa. ix. 4, 5. God often weakens the strength of his church to this day, to show that he can do without the help of those whom men are ready to think most mighty. And both these reflections are included in what the apostle says concerning the christian ministry, 2 Cor. iv. 7., in which, some think, he alludes to this story, *We have this treasure,* this light, *in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of men.*

3. Learn from the terrible alarm of the Midianites, the confusion of the last awful day; it shall come suddenly, as a thief in the night, when men are not aware. What terror and astonishment shall take hold of them, when the archangel shall blow the trumpet, *when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and*

the elements melt with fervent heat; when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout; with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God! May we prepare for that time, *and give diligence to be found of him in peace; that when Christ shall appear, we may stand before him with joy, and not be afraid at his coming.*

CHAPTER VIII.

In this chapter Gideon pacifieth the Ephraimites; is unkindly treated by the men of Succoth, whom he afterwards punished; he slays the two kings of Midian; and makes an ephod, which has a very bad effect; the chapter concludes with an account of his death, and Israel's ingratitude both to God and him.

1 AND the men of Ephraim, *who were proud and vain, because of the greatness of their tribe, and their having the ark among them,* said unto him, *when they brought him the heads of the two kings, (ch. vii. 25.),* Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And *instead of congratulating him, and returning him thanks,* they did chide with him sharply. And he, *knowing their proud and high spirit, gave them a soft and mild answer, and* said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? *you have been active in the work, while I and my men only stood by, and saw the Midianites fall upon one another.* [Is] not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim, *your pursuit of the flying forces, and taking two of their kings,* better than the vintage of Abi-ezer, *the whole work done by me and my house?* 3 God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated towards him, when he had said that.

4 And Gideon came to Jordan, [and] passed over, he and the three hundred men that [were] with him, faint, yet pursuing [them,] *not one of them was lost, but they were greatly fatigued by the length of the march.* 5 And he said unto the men of Succoth*, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they [be] faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian, *an important work, in which all*

* This was a city in the tribe of Gad, and was called Succoth, from Jacob's dwelling in booths there when he came from Mesopotamia.

Israel should join. 6 And the princes of Succoth said, [Are] the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army? *Art thou sure of victory with thy three hundred men against fifteen thousand? Overlooking the hand of God in this event, they would not expose themselves to the resentment of the Midianites by assisting Gideon; the answer was insolent, and the taunt bitter.* 7 And Gideon said, Therefore, *since you refuse my reasonable request, and treat me with such insolence, I declare that* when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, *which I am confident he will do,* then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. 8 And he went up thence to Penuel, *so called by Jacob, because he there wrestled with an angel,* and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered [him]. *They were probably idolaters, and hated Gideon for his zeal to promote reformation.* 9 And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower, *confidence in which made them so proud and presumptuous.*

10 Now Zeba and Zalmunna [were] in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand [men,] all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword, *and were expert and exercised in war.* 11 And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host: for the host was secure; *he took a compass, and fell on them when they did not expect it; they thought he was tired, and themselves in no danger.* 12 And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host *during the night.*

13 And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun [was up,] *and came very early in the morning to Succoth,* 14 And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him; and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, [even] threescore and seventeen men. 15 And he came unto the men of Succoth *early in the morning,* and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, [Are] the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men [that are] weary? *He repeats their own words, to show them the folly of their speech, and to reproach them for their ill usage of him.* 16 And he took

the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. *He did not put them to death, but whipped or tore them with thorns; a necessary piece of discipline, and all little enough to teach and awaken men who had lost not only piety but humanity too; by this he taught the rest of the inhabitants to take warning by their sufferings not to commit the like fault.* 17 And he beat down the tower of Penuel, *in which they trusted,* and slew the men of the city, *some of the chief men who were the most guilty.*

18 Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men [were they] whom ye slew at Tabor? *Gideon does not say when, but he knew the fact, and had a mind to bring them to confession.* And they answered, As thou [art,] so [were] they; each one resembled the children of a king. *This was designed as a compliment, and to gain Gideon's favour; there probably was a family likeness.* 19 And he said, They [were] my brethren, [even] the sons of my mother: [as] the LORD liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you; *if ye had shown them compassion and not have slain them in cool blood, when they were watching their flocks, or hid in the caves, (see ch. vi. 2.), I would have spared you; but now, as a magistrate, and their nearest kinsman, I shall avenge their blood.* 20 And he said unto Jether his first born, *to teach him to use his arms for God and his country,* Up, [and] slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he [was] yet a youth, *and they were bold, fierce men.* 21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man [is, so is] his strength, *we shall die more easily and honourably by thy hand.* And Gideon arose and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that [were] on their camels' necks*.

22 Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also, *as a king who has sovereign and supreme power, in which his children succeed him:* for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. *They pretend this was from gratitude to Gideon, but most probably it was to throw off the divine government, and to have a king like the nations about them.* 23 And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you, *as he has done hitherto, in a special, peculiar manner.*

* These ornaments were like those worn by our officers, called gorgets; the Hebrew is, *ornaments like the moon.* The custom was derived from the Phœnicians, who worshipped the moon, and they are used by the Arabians and Turks.

He modestly refuses this rash offer, as an attempt to break their theocracy, and alter God's method of government.

24 And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the ear-rings of his prey. (For they had golden ear-rings, because they [were] Ishmaelites.) *The Midianites and Ishmaelites were mixed together; most of the eastern nations wore gold or jewels in their ears or foreheads.* 25 And they answered, We will willingly give [them.] And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the ear-rings of his prey. 26 And the weight of the golden ear-rings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred [shekels] of gold; besides ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that [was] on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that [were] about their camels' necks. *In weight fifty-three pounds two ounces; in value about three thousand one hundred and two pounds ten shillings sterling.* 27 And Gideon made an ephod thereof, *a garment such as the high priest wore, (see* Exodus xxviii. 4.*)*, and put it in his city, [even] in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house; *it had a very bad effect and occasioned the sin of Israel, and the ruin of his house*.*

28 Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon; *they had no more disturbance during his life.* 29 And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. 30 And Gideon had three-score and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives. 31 And his concubine, *or second wife, (but whose children could not inherit)* that [was] in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech. *His name is set down to make way for the story that follows in the next chapter.* 32 And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.

33 And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god; *that is, Baal who was worshipped at Berith, a city of Phœnicia, near Sodom; or, as some think,*

* Some have thought, that Gideon, being disgusted at the men of Ephraim, intended to have an ephod and a priest, and to set up religious worship in his own tribe. But it appears to me more likely, from his general character, that he only intended it as a monument of his victory; and that he made an ephod, and not a pillar, because he would ascribe the victory entirely to God; and therefore he uses a sacred garment, as triumphing in the restoration of true religion by this victory.

Berith signifies a covenant, and because idolaters were used to bind themselves by covenant to his worship, he is here called a god who punished covenant-breakers. 34 And the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side; *they forgot his mercies, judgments, and deliverances:* 35 Neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, [namely,] Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel, *in hazarding his life, restoring their liberty, and establishing true religion among them; nor any kindness to his family, as they ought to have done.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. IT is a certain sign of a mean and proud spirit, for men to be displeased because they are not, as they think, sufficiently honoured and taken notice of. What a wretched figure the Ephraimites made! They might have offered themselves willingly; they should have sought occasion to attack the enemies of their brethren; but because they thought they were not treated suitably to their dignity, they chode sharply with their great deliverer. This is a very common case: men stand upon a point of honour, when God and their country call for their aid, and will do nothing, or even quarrel with those who do most, if they have not just such respect as they think they deserve. *Only by pride cometh this contention.* Our business is to act well the part Providence allots us, and not complain because we have not an easier or better.

2. Here is an additional proof that *a soft answer turneth away wrath.* Gideon never appeared so great, even when pursuing the Midianites, or destroying kings, as now, when he ruled his own spirit, treating insolent men with humility, angry men with meekness. Had he returned their ill language, probably as bad consequences would have followed as in Jephthah's time; but by calm language and humility he cooled their resentment, and sent them away satisfied. *He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty;* and no man is so truly great and honourable as he who keeps under his passions, and *by yielding pacifieth great wrath.*

3. Let us learn by Gideon's example, not to be discouraged from pursuing what is good, by any unkind or ill treatment we may meet with. The men of Succoth and Penuel derided and discouraged him, but he went on, pursued the Midianites, and

completed the victory. Let us go on and serve God, even if those who should join and help us, banter and abuse us. Though ready to tire and faint in our spiritual warfare, still let us hold on and pursue the victory, and we shall prevail. Let nothing we meet with discourage us from christian duty; but rather let every thing disagreeable whet our zeal and increase our resolution.

4. Persons in eminent and conspicuous stations of life should be very watchful of their conduct, lest they be accessary to the guilt and ruin of others. Gideon made an ephod, probably without any ill design; but it proved the ruin of his family, and a snare to Israel. They thought it was no harm to worship it, when so eminent and holy a man made it. If magistrates and ministers, parents, or heads of families, make one false step, their example will do mischief to their inferiors; children and servants will look upon a doubtful conduct in their superiors, as a kind of license to do evil. A person may, for reasons that will satisfy his own conscience, stay away from divine worship, often omit it in his family, or travel on the sabbath; which may lead his children and servants to do so when there is no good reason to be given, to do it often, and grow worse and worse. Let all be peculiarly watchful of their conduct, lest they do that which may prove a snare to their families, and those that come after them. Once more,

5. How detestable does ingratitude appear, ingratitude to man, and especially to God! How scandalously did Israel behave, after all that God and Gideon, as his instrument, had done for them! This is too much the case of our own nation, both towards God, and those who have been instruments of our deliverance; but when men forget God, it is no wonder that they forget their human benefactors and friends.

CHAPTER IX.

God being determined to punish the idolatry of Israel by the tyranny of one of their own people, in this chapter is Abimelech's rise, reign, and ruin. He had no call from God, nor did Israel want a judge; but he was resolved to be one if possible.

1 AND Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal, *by his concubine,* went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren; *he left his father's house, his uncles and other relations, who were persons of rank, and went to his mother's relations,* and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, 2 Speak, I pray you in the ears of all the men of Shechem, *to the elders and princes,* Whether [is] better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are] threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? Remember also that I [am] your bone and your flesh; *suggesting that his brethren designed to reign though his father declined it; that horrid confusion would attend such a number of governors; that they had better have only one; that himself was of their tribe, and city, and family; that thus they would have the honour of being allied to the king, and would enjoy the government they desired.* 3 And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words; and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He [is] our brother. *The plot took, and they chose him without consulting God or the other tribes, merely because he was their brother, hoping that theirs would be a capital city, and that they should have rich preferments.* 4 And they gave him threescore and ten [pieces,] *or pounds weight,* of silver, out of the house of Baal-berith; *thus the treasures of their idol god were the means of stirring up sedition;* wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons which followed him, *the scum of the country, idle, vagabond fellows, of desperate fortunes, who were proper instruments of his tyranny and cruelty.* 5 And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, [being] threescore and ten persons, upon one stone; *perhaps under pretence of a plot and rebellion against the commonwealth, or to expiate the guilt of Gideon in destroying the altars of Baal;* notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left;

for he hid himself *and escaped.* 6 And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, *the tower-house, where the magistrates sat,* and, *instead of revenging the murder, in a full house or senate, they* went, and made Abimelech king, *and afterwards proclaimed him* by the plain of the pillar that [was] in Shechem, *which Joshua set up under the oak, as a token of the covenant between God and them after reading the curses and the blessings: thus the crime was aggravated by being committed in such a sacred place.*

7 And when they told [it] to Jotham, *what the people had done, had forsaken God and lost all sense of justice and humanity,* he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, *when they were gathered together in the valley below on some festival,* Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you; *calling their attention in a very serious manner, and addressing them in a very beautiful fable or parable; an ancient way of instruction, which engaged the attention, and administered reproof with less offence.* 8 The trees went forth [on a time] to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us; *to represent the unreasonableness and wickedness of making any king: the trees of the Lord which he planted and protected, being weary of God's government, presumptuously attempted to alter it, and proposed it to the olive tree to reign over them, that is, to Gideon,* (chap. viii. 22). 9 But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man *, and go to be promoted over the trees? *or, as the margin, go up and down for other trees? intimating the duty of a good prince, to exert himself and take much pains to serve his people.* 10 And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, [and] reign over us. 11 But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? 12 Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, [and] reign over us. 13 And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees †. 14 Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, [and] reign over us? *The bramble, or thistle, was like Abimelech, a worthless, troublesome*

* God was honoured by the oil used in sacrifices, to feed the lamps, and anoint the priests, and it was useful to man in food and medicine.

† Wine was used in sacrifices: it was part of the provisions of God's house and altar, with which he was delighted, and men were cheered. Thus all these noble trees, that is, Gideon and his sons, much better men than Abimelech, had refused the dignity of which he was so ambitious.

thing, fit only to be burned; but it accepted the proposal without hesitation, and began to look big. 15 And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, [then] come [and] put your trust in my shadow, *give up yourselves wholly to my conduct, and rely on my protection, and then I will be sure to secure you; a fine arbour truly! more likely to tear and wound, than shelter them;* and if not, *if you will not submit to me, and do as I would have you,* let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon, *that is, the greatest of those who oppose him; hereby denoting the pride, folly, and cruelty of Abimelech. Then follows the moral or application of the fable.* 16 Now therefore if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands, *if ye have done righteous acts, and behaved gratefully to Gideon and his house,* 17 (For my father fought for you and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian, *when ye were sorely oppressed and could not help yourselves:* 18 And ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons upon one stone, *all except myself who escaped from you, but whose death you designed,* and have made Abimelech the son of his maid servant, king over the men of Shechem, *not over all Israel, but only over Shechem; though he has no good quality, only* because he [is] your brother;) 19 If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, [then] rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; *much cause of rejoicing and mutual satisfaction and delight may you have in one another.* 20 But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech, *that is, a spirit of dissension and revenge; may you mutually destroy each other: this is not a prediction, but an execration, called in v. 57, his curse.* 21 And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, *in the tribe of Judah near Jerusalem,* and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother*.

22 When Abimêlech had reigned three years over Israel, *over some part of Israel, who had come in afterwards, but not over*

* If all Gideon's sons were like this, we cannot help lamenting the fall of such a number of fine men, who might have been public blessings; but such a snare was the ephod to Gideon's house. The Greeks claim the honour of being the inventors of fables and parables, but this and Nathan's and others, show them to be much more ancient.

Judah, or else Jotham would not have been safe there. 23 Then God sent an evil spirit, *a spirit of discord and revenge, jealousy and distrust,* between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech; *he slighted them and they rebelled against him:* 24 That the cruelty [done] to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren; *all was intended by Providence to make their punishment remarkable.* 25 And the men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along that way by them; *there were no open hostilities, but on the dissension he left the city and went to Arumah, (v. 41.), his country-seat, and they lay in wait to seize his person as he returned, and plundered all of his party and friends that they met with:* and it was told Abimelech, *their whole plot was discovered to him.* 26 And Geal the son of Ebed came with his brethren, *his allies and friends; perhaps being bold men they were sent for to encourage and strengthen the conspiracy,* and went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him, *put themselves under his protection.* 27 And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, *which they durst not do before, because of Abimelech's forces,* and trode [the grapes,] and made merry, *with songs,* and went into the house of their god *with their first fruits,* and did eat and drink, *that is, feast on their sacrifice,* and cursed Abimelech, prayed their god to confound and destroy him. And Gaal the son of Ebed, *when he and the people were elevated with wine, began to insult Abimelech, and take measures to make himself their king, and he* said, who [is] Abimelech, and who [is] Shechem, that we should serve him? *the son of a woman of your city, and she but a concubine and servant; why should we submit to one so basely descended?* [is] not [he] the son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? *who defied your gods and threw down your altars; if ye must be in subjection, restore your old lords, and* serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem: for why should we serve him? *this upstart, famous for nothing but pride and cruelty? Gaal was a Gentile, perhaps a descendant of Hamor, and therefore insists upon this, adding,* 29 And would to God this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abimelech, *I would make him flee his country.* And he said to Abimelech, Increase thine army and come out. *He sent him a formal challenge to collect his forces and meet him in the field.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. We may observe the mischief which pride and ambition occasion, in the instance of Abimelech. What monstrous steps did he take to gain royal dignity! First, he flattered the men of Shechem; then bribed a number of villains to assist him; and at last imbrued his hands in the blood of his brethren. This is the way by which many ambitious men have arrived at government, and have for a time supported themselves in it. All sin will easily go down with those who are resolved at any rate to rise; such men will break through all the ties of natural affection, and of conscience too, to secure honour and power for themselves. Let us all guard against an ambitious spirit. *Let not our hearts be haughty nor our eyes lofty; for pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.*

2. Let us learn to be content with an humble station, as the most secure. Jotham in his parable intimates the danger of being great, as the reason why Gideon and others declined it. A man in power must lose a great deal of ease and comfort, subject himself to much toil and labour, and expose himself to the malice and ill-will of others. This is so common a case that it should make us content with inferior stations, and bring down all our aspiring thoughts. *Give us neither poverty nor riches; but having food and raiment, may we be therewith content.*

3. See what a vain thing popular applause is. The men of Shechem made Abimelech king one day, and almost the next they were for dethroning and murdering him: they cursed him in the house of their god, from whence they so lately took money to support him. How little is the clamour of the multitude to be depended upon, especially the fame that is gained by evil arts! Let us learn to be mortified to human applause, and *act as pleasing God who searches the heart.* Men may, and often do, prove like these Shechemites, false and perfidious. But whoso is approved of God shall be safe; they who are blessed of him, shall inherit greater honour than any earthly crown can give, and *delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

CHAP. IX. 30, to the end.

We have here an account of the destruction of the men of Shechem by Abimelech, and also of his destruction by a woman, with a stone from the tower of Thebez.

30 AND when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled. *He waited for an opportunity to restore Abimelech; but finding it in vain to oppose a popular tumult, he behaved in a fair way to Gaal;* 31 And, *being roused by this insult,* he sent messengers unto Abimelech, privily, saying, Behold Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren be come to Shechem; and, behold, they fortify the city against thee; *there is no sign that he will venture out, but only provide for his own defence.* 32 Now therefore up by night, *for fear of discovery,* thou and the people that [is] with thee, and lie in wait in the field: 33 And it shall be, [that] in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and, behold, [when] he and the people that [is] with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them, as thou shalt find occasion, *and as prudence may direct.*

34 And Abimelech rose up and all the people that [were] with him, by night, and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies, *the better to surprise and distract the Shechemites.* 35 And Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entering of the gate of the city, *to see that all was safe, and the guards in their proper stations; and Zebul as governor of the city accompanied him, to see that all did their duty:* and Abimelech rose up, and the people that [were] with him, from lying in wait. 36 And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains, *from Gerizim and Ebal, between which mountains the city lay.* And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as [if they were] men; *the mountains and trees cast a long shadow and deceive you. This Zebul said to detain Gaal and make him more secure; he was an artful man, and concealed his resentment well.* 37 And Gaal spake again, and said, See, there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim; *as they came nearer, Gaal plainly perceived that they were men, who*

were got to the middle of the mountain, and another party were coming along the plain. 38 Then said Zebul unto him, Where [is] now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who [is] Abimelech, that we should serve him? [is] not this the people that thou hast despised? go out, I pray now, and fight with them. *Here Zebul throws off the mask, upbraids him with his insolent language, and charges him with cowardice:* 39 And *upon this* Gaal went out before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. 40 And Abimelech chased him, and he, *being disheartened by Zebul, and seeing his own party weaker than he thought,* fled before him, and many were overthrown [and] wounded, [even] unto the entering of the gate, *the rest got into the city.* 41 And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah, *abode there with his forces waiting for some fit opportunity to surprise Shechem,* and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem. *Having lost the victory, he lost his popularity, and was forced to leave the city; perhaps was not suffered to enter it again.* 42 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people went out into the field, *about their business, or upon some solemn occasion in honour of their idol;* and they told Abimelech. 43 And he took the people *who were with him,* and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and behold, the people [were] come forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them. 44 And Abimelech, and the company that [was] with him, rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city, *to slay those that ran to secure themselves in the city:* and the two [other] companies ran upon all [the people] that [were] in the fields, and slew them. 45 And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and *being joined by Zebul and his men,* he took the city, and slew the people that [was] therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt*.

46 And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard [that,] *they thought themselves not safe, and therefore* they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith †. 47 And it was told Abimelech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together *in the temple of their god.* 48 And Abimelech gat him up to mount Zalmon, he and all the people that [were]

* This was the cause and sign of barrenness in those hot countries. It denoted his desire to have it made a perpetual desolation; but it was rebuilt. Rehoboam was crowned there, and it was called Sychar.

† A strong fortress in the temple of their god, like the capitol at Rome, or the temple at Jerusalem, which were reckoned impregnable places; or, which they hoped might be spared as sacred places.

with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid [it] on his shoulder, and said unto the people that [were] with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste, [and] do as I [have done.] 49 And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put [them] to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them; so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women, *being either burnt to death, or suffocated by the smoke. And thus, according to Jotham's declaration, fire came out from Abimelech, and devoured the men of Shechem and the house of Millo; the men of which, that is, the magistrates and guards, retired to this hold.*

50 Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it; *a city near Shechem, which had probably revolted from him.* 51 But there was a strong tower within the city, *large enough to hold all the inhabitants,* and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, *servants and common people,* and shut [it] to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower, *to throw down stones, and prevent his coming near to burn them as he did the Shechemites.* 52 And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire; *flushed with his late victory, he was fool-hardy enough to go to the very door, with a firebrand in his hand.* 53 And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull*. 54 Then, *finding himself mortally wounded,* he called hastily unto the young man his armour-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died†. 55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place.

56 Thus God rendered *a recompense for* the wickedness of Abimelech which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren; *it did not come by chance, the hand of God was in it.* 57 And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

* It was usual to have large stones in all the castles to annoy the enemy with.

† He had slain his brethren on a stone, and now a stone slays him, and lays low that head which had usurped the crown. He thought it dishonourable to die by the hand of a woman, and was willing to save his credit; but in vain, for it was remembered by posterity, see 2 Sam. x. 21.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We see in the instance before us, the evils of civil war. When the Shechemites broke through their constitution, and would have a king, no wonder God sent a spirit of discord among them, and made king and people sharers in the calamity. How sad was it in Israel, when such woful scenes as these stained the land, when every sword was against his fellow, and peace and quietness were destroyed. See what havock ambition and treachery make in a nation. Let us bless the guardian care of heaven that this is not our case; that our king is not such an oppressor as to make us wish to get rid of him; and that the men who, like Gaal, insult his title, and abuse his administration, are disappointed in their attempts to introduce changes and confusion among us. May God continue peace in all our borders! May he make *our king a nursing father to us.* May God save the king and bless the people! And let him have all the praise of our peace and liberty, and of every national blessing.

2. We see that *verily there is a God who judgeth in the earth,* and who *will make inquisition for blood.* How awfully, and yet how justly, did he punish Abimelech for murdering his brethren; and the men of Shechem for being accessary to it. They joined in this horrid design, and were destroyed one by another. God will return innocent blood on those that shed it, and there are not more evident proofs of a Providence than the discovery and punishment of inhuman murderers. God gives such persons blood to drink, for they are worthy. He delayed the punishment of Abimelech three years; but it came terribly at last. *The triumphing of the wicked is short,* and their time to fall quickly comes. Jotham's curse, which was not causeless, came upon the heads of those bloody and deceitful men. Abimelech died in a most shameful manner, with all the marks of a hard, impenitent heart; and showed no concern about his soul; so a fool dieth. The whole story teaches us, that *the Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth,* and that *the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands.*

CHAPTER X.

We have here an account of Israel being peaceable and happy under Tola and Jair, two of their judges; but they revolt and are punished, they repent and find mercy.

1 AND after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. 2 And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir*.

3 And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years. *He belonged to the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, was the first judge there, and a person of eminence;* 4 And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair, *or, the villages of Jair,* unto this day, which [are] in the land of Gilead. *These cities they enlarged and fortified; and rode from place to place as magistrates, to execute judgment.* 5 And Jair died, and was buried in Camon, *the place where he dwelt. We read of another Jair,* Numb. xxxii. 41.

6 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him. *Strange conduct! It looked as if their trade had been to import gods from other countries; they were resolved to go with the multitude; they liked their worship; their dancings, and merriment, and impure rites, suited their wicked taste.* 7 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon; *he gave them up to the power of two of those nations whose gods they served.* 8 And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel, *crushed them as between two millstones, as the original is, the Philistines on the west, and the Amorites on the east;* eighteen years, all the children

* Those are the best times to live in, of which the historian has least to say; nothing remarkable happened in Tola's time; all was quiet and peaceable. He preserved their liberty from being invaded, and the purity of their religion, which was their great defence, from being corrupted.

of Israel that [were] on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which [is] in Gilead. 9 Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; *they began with those who lay next their own country, and by degrees passed over Jordan;* so that Israel was sore distressed.

10 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, *not by way of complaint, but with great earnestness and penitence,* saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. 11 And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, *(whether by an angel, or prophet, or the high priest, is uncertain),* [Did] not [I deliver you] from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? 12 The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites*, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand: *deliverances not mentioned before; he had shown them more favours than were recorded.* 13 Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more, *in this remarkable manner, except ye repent.* 14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation; *see what they will do for all the sacrifices you have offered, and all the trouble and charge you are at about them; they are the gods you have chosen, let them save you. A very cutting but just reflection on their folly, and the impotency of their gods.* 15 And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; *chastise us with thine own hand as much as thou wilt, but deliver us not into the hands of these cruel men;* deliver us, only, we pray thee, this day, *and try us once more.* 16 And they put away the strange gods from among them, *which showed true humiliation at this time; it was an open proof of repentance, and attended with very happy effects, for we read no more of their idolatry for a long time after;* and *they* served the LORD; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel, *he showed them great pity and tenderness, dealt with them in such a way as men do when they are so affected.*

17 Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh. *This is introductory to the story in the next chapter; the children of Ammon raised*

* The Maonites were Canaanites who inhabited the wilderness of Maon, 1 Sam. xxiii. 24. and 2 Chron. xxvi. 7.

forces in Gilead, which they now called their own; and Israel encamped in Mizpeh, but afterwards went to their own land to raise more forces. 18 And the people [and] princes of Gilead, *that is, the princes and elders, held a consultation who should be their general and judge, and* said one to another, What man [is he] that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead; *but they found none to undertake it till they sent to Jephthah, as we read in the next chapter.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. God remembers all his kind interpositions for us, and the many deliverances he has afforded us. He reminded Israel of these; for they were ready to forget them, though so remarkable. This should engage us to take notice of such things, namely, that God sets them down in his book of remembrance, charges them, as it were, to our account; and if we forget them, great will be our shame and misery; may he not expostulate with us, 'Did I not deliver thee from the Spaniards and the French, and the rebels, again and again?' Let us keep in memory God's wonderful works, and give him the glory of all.

2. Here is a good model for penitents, that is, persons affected with a sense of sin, and humbled under God's hand. It becomes them to see the vanity of those things which they were so fond of, and which they trusted in, to the neglect of God; and their insufficiency to help in times of distress. Many *make a god of their belly*, many of their riches, many *love pleasure more than God.* But can these deliver us in times of trouble? Can these soften our bed of sickness, compose the tumult of our spirits? Can these save us in a dying hour? Let this then be our language, *What have I to do any more with idols?* Let those who are under God's rebukes, not only acknowledge the insufficiency of creatures, but *his justice and righteousness. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* God is not unrighteous when he taketh vengeance. When, as a nation, we expect calamities at home or abroad, and are praying for deliverances, let us remember to acknowledge our folly and guilt, and prepare to meet God in the way of his judgments, saying, *We have sinned, do thou unto us as seemeth good in thy sight.*

3. Let us with pleasure and astonishment contemplate this wonderful instance of divine compassion to a sinful and oppressed

people, *v.* 16., *He delighteth not in our afflictions; judgment is his strange work;* he is glad to see the marks of repentance. He represents himself as deeply affected when his children rebel, and he sees it necessary to chasten them; as parents are, when their children are afflicted, or they are obliged to correct them. What encouragement is this to turn to him, to put away iniquity, and implore his mercy, and beseech him to remove every calamity we labour under. But let us remember, that all his declarations of mercy are made only to those who repent and put away sin, and return to his service. To those he will revoke his sentence, and show mercy. *Come,* then, *let us return to the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.*

CHAPTER XI.

In which we have Jephthah's vow; an account of his successful war with the Ammonites; and the trouble he was brought into on account of his vow.

1 NOW Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, *a man of strength and courage,* and he [was] the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. 2 And Gilead's wife bare him sons: and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou [art] the son of a strange woman. 3 Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob, *the northern part of the lot of Manasseh:* and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him, *men of narrow fortunes, who were glad to enlist under such a brave leader; and they assisted him in his inroads upon the Ammonites, and other neighbour countries, who were ravaging the Canaanites, and lived on the booty they got.* 4 And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel; *they had often made inroads upon them, but came then with a much larger force to attack them.* 5 And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob; *knowing him to be a brave man, used to the sword, and fit to be a commander.* 6 And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the

children of Ammon. 7 And Jephthah said unto the children of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and, *as magistrates, assist my brethren* to expel me out of my father's house: and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress? *Can ye expect that I should come and help you?* 8 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead; *we repent of what we have done, and are come now to make thee amends, by offering thee the post of honour and authority, by putting ourselves under thy protection, and making thee head over all the tribes on this side Jordan.* 9 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver them before me, shall I be your head? *Will you fulfil these engagements, thus reward my services, and place me in a station of honour and usefulness among you?* 10 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The LORD be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words. 11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh; *he repeated before the assembly at Mizpeh the agreement between them; and it was confirmed solemnly on both sides, as in God's presence.*

12 And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, *as Moses commanded in such cases,* (see Deut. xx. 10, 11.), saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land? *What just cause hast thou to invade my country? A wise and prudent conduct.* 13 And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan*; now therefore restore those [lands] again peaceably. 14 And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon, *pleading not guilty, and denying the charge:* 15 And *they* said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon; *they had express orders to the contrary, and found the land in the possession of another prince and people:* 16 But when

* The Israelites had taken it from Sihon and Og, who it seems had taken it from the Ammonites, Joshua xiii. 25. Probably the Moabites were now gathered under this king, for Chemosh is called his god. He tells them they must not expect peace unless they resigned his country.

Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea, and came to Kadesh; 17 Then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: but the king of Edom would not hearken [thereto.] And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab: but he would not [consent:] and Israel abode in Kadesh, *remained some time there in a peaceable manner, and then chose a tedious, troublesome journey round about rather than give any offence.* 18 Then they went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon [was] the border of Moab. 19 And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon, king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land into my place. 20 But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel; *he not only refused their request, but made war against them; he was the aggressor, they only acted on the defence.* 21 And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them: so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. 22 And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. 23 So now the LORD God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldst thou possess it? *God hath given it us, and why should we give it to you?* 24 Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess, *to whose assistance thou ascribest all thy victories?* So whomsoever the LORD our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess; *an argument on their own principles, which they could not gainsay.* 25 And now [art] thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them? *your predecessors never claimed it, never disputed our title, or took up arms against us for the restitution of those lands.* 26 While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that [be] along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover [them] within that time? *Being forced to go three hundred years back for the shadow of an argument, therefore Jephthah concludes that the king*

had no right to make war, nor claim the lands. 27 Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon; *we commit our cause to him, and may he give victory to the injured party!* 28 Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him; *he could not confute Jephthah's arguments, but he would try the logic of kings, and trust to his sword.*

29 Then the spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, *a spirit of wisdom and courage,* and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over [unto] the children of Ammon, *and gathered forces together in the countries through which he passed.* 30 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD*, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, 31 Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, *consecrated to his special service,* and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. *The margin renders it, Or I will offer it up for a burnt offering.*

32 So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands: 33 And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, [even] twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter, *he pursued them to their city, destroyed great numbers, and effectually subdued them.* Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

34 And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold, his daughter, *his only child, accompanied with her neighbours and companions,* came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances, *to welcome him and congratulate his victory:* and she [was his] only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter. 35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, *as was usual when great calamities happened,* and said, Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me, *thou art one of my great troubles; that is, together with his brethren, and the Ammonites; and the trouble was the greater, as he expected comfort and satisfaction in her:* for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back, *have*

* It was common for commanders to make such vows, of being grateful to God, offering sacrifices, building temples, &c. So the Greeks and Romans did.

made a vow that I cannot retract. 36 And she said unto him, My father, [if] thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, [even] of the children of Ammon. *An heroic reply; she probably did not know what the vow was, but was willing to submit to it, since God had made her father the chief instrument of such eminent service to Israel.* 37 And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. 38 And he said, Go. And he sent her away [for] two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains, *a solitary place fit for lamentation.* 39 And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her [according] to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, *or an ordinance of the elders,* 40 [That] the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament, *or, to talk with,* the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year*.

* On reading this chapter there arises a very difficult question, and that is, *What Jephthah did with his daughter?* Now there are two opinions on this subject. One is, that *she was really made a burnt offering;* the other, *that she was consecrated to the service of the tabernacle,* employed herself in work relating to it, and spent her days in religious solitude there. The history is very ambiguous, and does not positively determine either way. In *ver.* 31., the marginal reading is, *that which cometh forth of the doors of my house, shall surely be the Lord's, Or, I will offer it up for a burnt offering;* [Kennicott says, *Or, I will offer a burnt offering;*] and in *ver.* 40., the margin reads, (instead of *the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah*), THEY WENT FROM YEAR TO YEAR TO TALK WITH HER. This shows that our translators were very uncertain about the matter. The most common opinion is, that *she was not slain, but devoted to the service of the tabernacle,* and the reasons given for it are chiefly these. They argue from the nature of the vow, which must be taken with this proviso, *if what came out of his house was fit to be offered.* Had it been a dog, or an ass, it would have been an affront to the God of Israel to offer it: if it was not fit to be offered, he might redeem it, according to the law in *Lev.* xxvii. 4., and therefore he would certainly do it in the case of his only child: but he would so far fulfil his vow as to deprive himself of having any posterity by her, which was a great grief to him. If it be alleged that he had no power thus to seclude her; it is answered, Much less had he power to sacrifice her.

Another argument is, That *she bewails her virginity, and not her death;* a trifling circumstance, if she had to live but two months. It is argued further, That *to have sacrificed her would have been the highest affront to Jehovah.* A sacrifice to Moloch would never have been suffered in Israel, especially at a time when they had put away their idolatry, and were a reformed and penitent people. Besides, no sacrifice could be offered but by the priests, and we can never imagine they would do it, in direct opposition to the law of God, and so become like the cursed nations. But the chief argument seems to be this, That *it was only a simple vow; a dedication or consecration; and therefore his daughter might be redeemed.* A different word *(a cherem)* is used for the vow by which the accursed nations were devoted, and which could not be recalled. One can never imagine that the apostle would have celebrated Jephthah, if he had been guilty of sacrificing his daughter.

On

REFLECTIONS.

1. We learn hence not to despise or insult any persons, for we know not how soon we may need their help. Jephthah's brethren and friends cast him out, not for any fault of his; but they were glad to send for him again. It is the part of wisdom to treat every one with respect, and to make no man our enemy, for we may want him to be a friend. *All of us are members one of another,* the meanest is useful; and *the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee, nor the hand to the foot, I have no need of thee.* Let us, therefore, cultivate good-will to all men, and be ready to do all friendly offices towards them.

2. We learn from the example of Jephthah, as Solomon exhorts, *with good advice to make war.* It is the wisdom of princes and nations to take all fair and honourable methods to prevent quarrels or ruptures, and to propose terms of peace. War is a desperate remedy, and should never be tried till all other things have failed; all wise and good princes, sensible of this, will never delight in war, but rather put up with small affronts than resent them. The same will hold good with respect to quarrels and contentions between particular persons; all methods should be tried to promote reconciliation, and to prevent the continuance and increase of differences. *If it be possible then, as much as lieth in us, let us live peaceably with all men.*

On the other hand, it is maintained, That *he did sacrifice her.* This, it is said, is the plain meaning of the history, that Jephthah was determined to present some human sacrifice, his wife, child, or servant, (for what else was likely to come out of his house and meet him?) something valuable in return for this great blessing. They say, there is no instance of persons being thus consecrated to the service of the tabernacle in a state of virginity. As to her bewailing her virginity, it is said, she could not with honour bewail her death, because occasioned by so glorious a victory and triumph. But it was natural, considering that she was the general's only child, to bewail that she died unmarried. In short, say they, he seems to have been a rough, untractable man, who having made a rash vow, was determined to execute it; and having seen such practices in the land of Tob, and knowing little of the law of God, he might probably do it himself, without the knowledge or consent of the priest; and the apostle to the Hebrews might have some evidence that he repented of this crime, as he lived six years after it was committed.

This is the substance of the arguments on both sides. I own it seems to me, that he did not sacrifice her. If he did mean that, undoubtedly it was a most foolish and rash vow, and fulfilling it (if he did fulfil it) was a most enormous crime. He should have consulted the priest on the occasion, paid the price of redemption appointed, offered a great sacrifice out of the flock, owned himself in the wrong, and taken shame to himself for his rashness. God expressly forbade human sacrifices; he mentions it as one of the chief abominations for which he drove out the Canaanites; so that it was a very bad action, and I wonder any divines should have ever attempted to vindicate it. But the reasons offered are not sufficient to induce us to suppose that he did sacrifice her, since the words will very well bear the former interpretation.

3. Let us learn to be upon our guard against rash vows and resolutions. It may be sometimes useful to bind ourselves by solemn vows, to show our gratitude to God, and confirm our regard to his glory. But those vows should be wisely made, and extend only to those things that will be clearly serviceable to the interests of religion, which are our duty, had no such vows been made. But many persons, besides Jephthah, have run themselves and their families into great inconveniences by rash resolutions and vows; therefore it is better to let such things alone, and always guard our hearts and lips. So Solomon advises, Eccles. v. 2., *Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.* And again, in *ver.* 5., *Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.*

4. Whatever we have vowed to God, let us perform it, if it be possible and lawful. I say lawful, for unlawful vows are better broken than kept; and should be repented of with deep humiliation. But in lawful things, though the observance of them may put us to some inconvenience, let us be steady. *A citizen of Zion sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not.* We have all of us vowed to be the Lord's by our profession of christianity, and by giving up ourselves to him. Let us remember that *we have opened our mouth, and cannot go back* with honour and a good conscience. Let us be faithful to all our engagements. So Solomon exhorts, *Eccles.* v. 4., *When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it, for he hath no pleasure in fools. Pay that which thou hast vowed.*

5. The submission of Jephthah's daughter to her father's rash vow, is very amiable and worthy of imitation. She showed much obedience to her father, great love to her country, and joy for its success, in cheerfully consenting to be treated according to it. This is a beautiful example for children, who should be subject to their parents, as far as it is agreeable to the will of God, and what they require is lawful in itself; else there is no obligation. Let them especially submit to all their good resolutions for the honour of God, and the support of religion in their family. This example reads us all a lesson of submission to God, our heavenly father, whose injunctions are always wise and kind; and of a cheerful resignation to him, to do with us as his infinite wisdom directs: *Here am I,* should each of us say, *let the Lord do with me as seemeth good in his sight.*

6. The last reflection shall be on the different opinions of learned and pious men concerning this dark affair of Jephthah's vow; since their sentiments are so different and opposite, we should learn candour and humility, and bear with one another amidst different sentiments about disputed points. When I mention the names of Pool, Henry, Hallet, and almost all the old commentators on the one side, and Perkins, Cradock, the Assembly's Annotations, the Universal History, and most modern writers on the other, we may be sure it is a difficult point, and may also be sure that it is not a very important one; and in such a case, nothing can be more unreasonable, absurd, and unbecoming, than confidence, and a contempt of those who are otherwise minded. Let this teach us to be thankful that every thing which is fundamental in religion is plain and clear. May we think most of, and delight most in, the indisputable parts of religion; and remember and practise what God requires of us, namely, that we *do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.*

CHAPTER XII.

In this chapter we have an account of a quarrel between the Ephraimites and the Gileadites; of Jephthah's death; and of three other judges that God raised up for Israel.

1 AND the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, *to the half tribe of Manasseh on the other side Jordan, where Jephthah lived,* and said unto Jephthah, *in an insolent manner, in order to quarrel with him, as they had done with Gideon,* Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire*. 2 And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands; *which shows that he did not undertake the war without a just cause, and that he did call them, but they refused to come.* 3 And when I saw that ye delivered [me] not, I put my life inmy hands, *exposed myself and people to great danger; like a man that carries a precious jewel in his hand which might*

* This shows that they were disposed to censure and quarrel with him. Had he sacrificed his daughter, that would have been another matter of accusation.

easily be snatched from him; and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand, *he approved what I did, and gave me success:* wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me? *it is the highest baseness and ingratitude. But the answer had no effect.* 4 Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites [are] fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, [and] among the Manassites; *Ye are the refuse and scum of these two tribes, and therefore should not have undertaken a matter of such importance without our knowledge, who are so much your betters.* 5 And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was [so,] that when those Ephraimites which were escaped, *and who now themselves were fugitives indeed,* said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, [Art] thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; 6 Then said they unto him, *in order to see whether he was of any other tribe,* Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce [it] right*. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand, *in the fight, in the pursuit, and at the river; though the Gileadites were cruel to revenge their angry words so severely, yet God was just in punishing this proud, passionate and ungrateful people, who despised and threatened Jephthah, who had done so worthily in Israel, and abused their brethren, who had shown such a laudable zeal.*

7 And Jephthah judged Israel six years: then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in [one of] the cities of Gilead.

8 And after him Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel. 9 And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, [whom] he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad, for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. 10 Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Beth-lehem.

11 And after him Elon a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. 12 And Elon the Zebulonite, died, and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.

13 And after him, Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel. *In him the tribe of Ephraim began to recover its dignity again.* 14 And he had forty sons and thirty nephews, *or*

* These Ephraimites spoke a different dialect, and could not pronounce the *sh*, as the French cannot pronounce our *th*, nor we pronounce the Welch *ch*; by this means he was easily discovered.

grandsons, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years. 15 And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites. *All these judges lived in peaceable times, maintained the purity of God's worship, died and were buried in peace, the last of them in the mount of the Amalekites, probably so called from a signal victory gained over them in that place.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. See the mischief of pride and envy, and the effects of them, upbraiding and angry words. The pride of the Ephraimites because they had not the honour of the victory, led them to quarrel with Jephthah and their brethren; and to come with such multitudes, in such a riotous manner, with malice in their hearts, lying in their tongues, and violence in their hands, though it was quite unreasonable. The guilty persons began to accuse their brethren, as is generally the case; but how pitiful, how detestable do they appear! May we guard against thinking that every honour is our due, and envying those that are honoured and distinguished above us. Let us ever maintain an humble spirit, and take heed also to our tongues; guard against calling ill names, and using scurrilous language: grievous words stir up anger, and separate chief friends. Let us then learn to bridle our tongues; for the tongue, when it uses ill language, sets on fire the course of nature, and *is itself set on fire of hell.*

2. See what fatal consequences flow from resenting injuries received, and being hasty to avenge ourselves. The Ephraimites formerly quarrelled with Gideon, as they now did with Jephthah; but he returned them a mild answer, and turned off their reproach and censures with a compliment, and it ended well. But this rough hero, Jephthah, expostulated with them too warmly, and increased, rather than lessened, their anger; and the Gileadites fell upon them with the utmost fury: *their anger was fierce, and their wrath was cruel.* They contrived a bloody artifice to kill their brethren, and no doubt destroyed many innocent persons, who might naturally be terrified with the sight of bloodshed, so as not rightly to pronounce their Shibboleth. So madly and cruelly do men act when they give a loose to their passions, and take the work of vengeance into their own hands. Jephthah and the Gileadites lost all the honour of their victory over the Ammonites,

when they showed in this instance that they were the slaves of passion and resentment. May we learn to govern our passions, and rule our own spirits. *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.*

3. Let us not be cruel or severe to those of our brethren who cannot pronounce our Shibboleth, who cannot just think, or say, or worship, as we do. *Let us do unto them as we wish they would do unto us.* If they should be angry, revengeful, persecuting, and malicious, still *let us love our enemies, bless them that curse us, and do good to them that despitefully use and persecute us;* and thus show ourselves to be *the children of our heavenly Father, who causeth his sun to shine, and his rain to descend, on the evil and the good, on the just and the unjust.*

CHAPTER XIII.

We are now entering on the history of Samson, who was a great scourge to the enemies of his country. In this chapter his birth is foretold, by an angel, to his mother; he appears again to Manoah and his wife; they discover that he was an angel; and in due time Samson is born.

1 AND the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. *This was the sixth and longest oppression of Israel; while the Ammonites distressed them in the east, the Philistines did so in the west.*

2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites*, whose name [was] Manoah; and his wife [was] barren, and bare not. 3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou [art] barren and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. *This address engaged her attention, as it plainly proved that he was a prophet who spoke to her, because he knew her circumstances.*

* Dan lay next to the Philistines; it was proper, therefore, that a deliverer should rise from thence. Samson was the first hero of that tribe.

4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean [thing] *nothing that is forbidden to the Nazarites,* (Num. vi. 2—5.), *much less any thing forbidden to others;* 5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb, *that is, separated to the service of God:* and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines; *this deliverance was not to be completed till David's time.*

6 Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, *that is, a holy prophet sent of God,* and his countenance [was] like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible, *that is, venerable, and full of majesty, which struck such an awe into her that she could not ask his name, or make any particular inquiry: she accordingly adds,* but I asked him not whence he [was,] neither told he me his name: 7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean [thing:] for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death, *whereas others might be so for a certain time only.*

8 Then Manoah entreated the LORD, and said, O my LORD, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. *He believed the message, and instead of sending to seek the messenger, applied to God by prayer, that the man of God might come again and teach him more fully what to do to the child, and how to bring it up.* 9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband [was] not with her. 10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and showed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me that came unto me the [other] day. *She thought this was in answer to her husband's prayer, and therefore concluded that the angel would stay till she went and fetched him.* 11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, [Art] thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I [am.] 12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass; *the language of faith as well as desire:* How shall we order the child, and [how] shall we do unto him? 13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. 14 She may not eat of any [thing] that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine nor strong drink, nor eat any

unclean [thing:] all that I commanded her let her observe; *repeating the particulars he enjoins, that she should abstain from what he forbade, and do what he commanded.*

15 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. 16 And the angel of the LORD *declined this offer, and* said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD*: for Manoah knew not that he [was] an angel of the LORD. 17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What [is] thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour, *have further acquaintance with thee, speak of thee with reverence and gratitude, and make thee some present.* 18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it [is] secret? *or wonderful, as in the margin, see* Isaiah ix. 6. *Hence some suppose it was Christ who spoke to him; he would instruct him in his duty, but not satisfy his curiosity.* 19 So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered [it] upon a rock unto the LORD, *in the presence of the angel:* and [the angel] did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. *He probably brought fire out of the rock, as he who appeared to Gideon did.* 20 For it came to pass, when the flame went up towards heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on [it,] and *being quite astonished, and filled with reverence and horror,* they fell on their faces to the ground. 21 But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he [was] an angel of the LORD, *because he was neither confined to the earth, nor hurt by the fire.* 22 And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God; *according to a common notion of the Jews, that it was death to see God or an angel.* 23 But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these [things,] nor would as at this time have told us [such things] as these. *Thus his wife nobly argues him out of his panic, by these three considerations; he accepted their sacrifice, he showed them all those things about their son's birth and education, and the deliverance which he should begin; which would be impossible if they were to die; nor would he at this*

* A prophet might authorize him, though he was not a priest, to offer a sacrifice to God, and to do it there as well as at the tabernacle.

time when we are so oppressed, and have no open vision in the land, have done such a miracle, if he had designed to destroy us.

24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson* : and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol. *A camp was formed to give some check to the oppression of the Philistines; and when the Israelites went out to exercise, he went with them, and showed strength and courage beyond his age; to intimate what he would do for his country in due time.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. THE first reflection here, I apprehend, is a very important one to the happiness of mankind; but I choose to deliver it in the words of good Mr. Henry. 'Women with child ought conscientiously to avoid whatever they have reason to think will be any way prejudicial to the health or good constitution of the fruit of their body.' Perhaps Samson's mother was to refrain from wine, not only because he was to be a Nazarite, but because he was designed to be a man of great strength, to which his mother's temperance would greatly contribute. Many of the ill habits of body that children bring into the world with them, are owing to the irregularities of their mothers; and most of the diseases of which so many young children die, arise from a bad mass of blood communicated to them. This will easily gain credit among all considerate persons, if they will only take a view of the different conditions of the children of the poor and rich, of labourers and gentlemen; and no wonder, when luxury and excess so much prevail among persons of fortune and leisure. But the irregularities I am cautioning against, not only produce bad constitutions of body in their children, but bad tempers, and ill dispositions of mind. 'The first duty parents owe to their children, as Dr. Delany observes, is to convey health and strength, a good constitution of body and mind to them, as far as it is in their power; by a proper care of their own health, and a conscientious abstinence from vice and excess of every kind.' We learn,

2. That those who want and humbly seek divine direction, may hope for it. Manoah prayed that God would teach him his

* Some think this is derived from a root that signifies the *sun*, to intimate the good effect his appearance and interposition should have on the affairs of Israel, and his extraordinary endowments of body and mind.

duty, and God did so. It is thus, good men own and *acknowledge God in all their ways, and he directs their paths.* We should do this especially when we have experienced, as in the case before us, his readiness to favour and help us. There are secret things with which we have nothing to do; they are as little to our purpose as the name of an angel: but in every case of importance let our eyes be up to the Lord, and he will some way or other *teach us his paths,* Psal. xxv. 8.

3. Parents should be very solicitous to know how they should order their children, and what they should do unto them. The art of education is the most important and difficult art in the world, and therefore it should be carefully studied. Many excellent treatises have been written by Locke, Doddridge, &c., on the subject. We have the word of God, which is the best guide: but we need direction in many particulars, where general rules will not answer. Therefore let us look up to God, that he would give us wisdom and grace to manage our children aright, train them up in the right way, and make them Nazarites to God, that is, consecrated to God's service, and, like Samson, *deliverers of Israel,* public blessings to the community. This is the business of both parents, as Manoah's address to the angel intimates; and as they have a common right to the child, they ought to unite their endeavours to order it aright. And their united endeavours will be little enough to discharge this important trust well. We may observe,

4. That God's accepting the sacrifice of Christ, is a proof that he is reconcileable to guilty creatures. There is a great deal of good sense in the argument of Manoah's wife, *v.* 23., and it is applicable to this case. God appointed the sacrifice of Christ, and declared his acceptance of it by raising him from the dead; by sending down his Spirit, and acknowledging and accepting his Son as our mediator and representative: therefore he will not be inexorable; *we shall not die, but live,* and be happy, if we apply to him in the gospel way. He hath showed us many glorious things to confirm our faith. She argued from a promise given; we, in the present case, from a promise fulfilled. Let this thought engage us to love God, and to devote ourselves to his service. *I beseech you therefore in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin,* that is, a sacrifice for sin, *for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

CHAPTER XIV.

The history of Samson is not equal to what might have been expected from him. We have here the foundation of his sorrows, laid in an unsuitable marriage; and the beginning of his exploits against the Philistines.

1 AND Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath, of the daughters of the Philistines*. 2 And he came up and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath, of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. 3 Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is [there] never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well; *he did well to ask his parents' consent; but the thing was ill in itself, as being contrary to the law of God.* 4 But his father and his mother knew not that it [was] of the LORD that he sought an occasion against the Philistines; *not that God put this into his heart, because it was wrong; but the meaning is, that God determined to bring good to Israel out of these irregular steps of Samson; in this marriage Samson probably sought for an occasion of attacking the Philistines from some private and personal affront:* for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel, *and therefore it was not safe for the whole body of the people to provoke them.*

5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath, *probably to gather some grapes:* and, behold, a young lion roared against him; *a young lion of remarkable force came with open mouth to devour him.* 6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, *a spirit of extraordinary courage and resolution;* and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he [had] nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done, *lest the Philistines, knowing of it, should be jealous of him and his great strength.*

* Timnath was a city in his own tribe; but the Philistines possessed it. See Joshua xix. 43.

7 And he went down, and talked with the woman, and she pleased Samson well; *they concluded of the marriage, and the time of it.*

8 And after a time, *probably a year, which was customary with the Jews,* he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, [there was] a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. *The Seventy say, in the lion's mouth.*
9 And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

10 So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. 11 And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him, *to show their respect, and for the greater honour of the solemnity, called in the New Testament, children of the bride chamber.* 12 And Samson, *according to the common custom of the east, proposed a question to exercise their invention and wit, and* said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, *for so long the feast lasted,* and find [it] out, then I will give you thirty sheets, *or shirts,* and thirty change of garments *upper garments which were often put off and on.* 13 But if ye cannot declare [it] me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it, *and thus they agree to the conditions.* 14 And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness*. And they could not in three days expound the riddle. 15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have, (*in the Heb., to possess us, or to impoverish us?* [is it] not [so?] *Before this they no doubt had used entreaties, but now they added a very barbarous threatening, and a severe reproach, What, have ye called us to make us pay dear for our entertainment?*
16 And Samson's wife *tried all her eloquence, and* wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told [it] me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told

* The first part of the opposition is plain, but not the second; weakness is opposed to strength, but not to sweetness. This would exercise their skill, and when solved, would give him occasion to tell the story on which it was grounded.

[it] my father nor my mother, *with whom I have had a long and intimate acquaintance, and canst thou desire me to tell it thee? It will show want of respect to them,* and shall I tell [it] thee? 17 And she wept before him the seven days, *or the rest of the seven days,* while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people; *at last she prevailed, we may suppose, upon promise of secrecy. But she told it her neighbours, whom she loved and feared more than her husband.*

18 And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What [is] sweeter than honey? and what [is] stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle; *if ye had not made use of my wife's assistance, ye could not have found out my riddle: comparing his wife to a young heifer not yet subdued to the yoke of obedience.*

19 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, *a city of the Philistines,* and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil; *they were probably at a feast making merry, and had on their best apparel, which Samson took from them,* and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle *. And his anger was kindled *against his wife for betraying him as well as against his guests,* and he went up to his father's house *without her.* 20 But Samson's wife was [given] to his companion, whom he had used as his friend. *She resented his conduct, and looking upon herself as forsaken, she married one of the bride men to whom Samson had been particularly kind and obliging, whom perhaps she loved too well, and was too willing to oblige.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE see an instance in Samson of the sad consequences of being unequally yoked, and of marrying where there is neither mutual affection nor any sense of religion. Samson acted in a manner very unworthy a Nazarite, or a patriot, in marrying a Philistine, an enemy to God and Israel. He was attracted chiefly by a fair face, and sacrificed every important consideration to his foolish fancy. There are many such melancholy instances as this in scripture, which were *recorded for our admonition*; and innumera-

* Nothing can vindicate this conduct, but the treachery he had met with from his wife.

ble ones before our eyes of the misery of such marriages: yet young people will not take warning. When they are only governed by the eye, or the fancy, no wonder they entail sorrow and calamity on themselves and their offspring. 'I wish, (says Bishop Hall,) Manoah could speak so loud, that all our Israelites might hear him.' *Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to marry a stranger to God and religion?* If religion be any thing, how dare we not regard it in our most important choice? Let those who are courting alliances with irreligious persons, or matching into families where there is neither the fear or worship of God, learn from this example the folly of such a conduct; for there cannot be greater folly, or a surer way to misery, than to marry a fool, a sot, or a knave, though ever so rich or handsome.

2. The way of spending their time at the feasts among the ancients suggests to us a useful lesson, and reproves the corruptions of the present day. We find by this story as well as by the custom of the Greeks and Romans, that at their feasts they were merry and wise, had something to exercise their minds; and did not spend it merely in indulging their appetites, in cards, and dancing, much less in drinking to excess, sending round the glass and the toast, till they were raging mad. This excess of riot was not known in ancient days; and it is a shame that it should be found among christians. Let us attend to that advice of the apostle, Ephes. v. 4., *to avoid all filthiness, foolish talking, and jestings,* double meanings; the frequent attendants on feasts, especially marriage solemnities; but by no means becoming or convenient: *but rather giving thanks,* or, as the word signifies, edifying, friendly, cheerful discourse, such as may administer wisdom and grace to the hearers. We are accountable to God for our time, and should therefore be concerned to improve it well, and never trifle it away.

3. Let us learn to *cease from man,* and not expect too much from those, whose friendship and affection we imagine may safely be depended upon. What a base trick did Samson's wife play him, like a true Philistine! His friends and companions also proved treacherous and brutish. Let us not put too much confidence in any man, but behave with prudence and caution. Josephus tells us, that 'when his companions solved his riddle, and said, *What is sweeter than honey?* He replied, *What is more perfidious than a woman?*' This was true of his own wife, and he could expect no better. While we are careful to guard against a jealous and sus-

picious temper, which is the very bane of friendship, and the utter destruction of conjugal affection, let us never suffer our passions to out-run our judgment, or trust too much to any of our friends. There is a friend we may impart every secret to, and rely entirely upon, namely, the ever-blessed and eternal God; and *blessed is that man whose hope the Lord is.*

CHAPTER XV.

Samson is still in his own person a great scourge to the enemies of Israel. We have in this chapter three instances of it.

1 BUT it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, *at the feast of Pentecost, about the middle of April, a season of great joy in that country,* that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber; *not knowing that his wife was given to another, he went with a design to be reconciled to her.* But her father would not suffer him to go in. 2 And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion, *using Samson exceedingly ill in not endeavouring to bring about a reconciliation and waiting for it: to prevent Samson's resentment he adds,* [Is] not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her. 3 And Samson, *turning from him with scorn and indignation,* said concerning them, *to those whom he met,* Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure. *Probably the people approved the marriage with Samson's companion, and were present at it.* 4 And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, *with the assistance of his countrymen and father's house*,* and took firebrands, *or torches made with pitch,* and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails, *he coupled them to prevent their running into holes.* 5 And when he had set the brands on fire, he let [them] go into the standing corn of the Philistines, *some in one part and some in another,* and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards [and]

* Foxes were numerous in that country, and several places were named from the multitude of foxes found there.

olives*. 6 Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they, *that is, some of them who had heard Samson's threatening words,* answered, *and said,* Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire. *They burned the house and them in it; this was barbarous, but God was righteous in thus punishing their treachery.* 7 And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease, *unless some further provocation be given.* 8 And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter, *some in one place, some in another, as they came in his way:* and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam; *a strong place, where Rehoboam afterwards built a city,* 2 Chron. xi. 5, 6.

9 Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. 10 And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us, *since we pay our tribute, and have com-*

* God, who directed the beasts to Noah's ark, and the quails to Israel's camp, must have assisted Samson in collecting those foxes, and by this means he avoided an open rupture with the Philistines; he rids his own country of many noxious animals, and severely scourges his enemies.

Mr. Orton observes, that the Romans used every year, in the middle of April, to let loose in the circus, or the place where the public exercises were performed, some foxes with burning torches at their tails: a custom probably derived from the Phœnicians, who lived in the country which was formerly the Philistines', and that this custom was kept up in remembrance of this event.

But as many very respectable writers have given a different interpretation of this story, the Editor begs leave to add the following quotation: 'The only difficulty in this chapter, is to account for the story of Samson's foxes. Where could he meet with such a vast number as three hundred? how could he unkennel them and catch them? where could he put them? and how feed and preserve them, till he had collected the whole number, and found a fit opportunity for his purpose? and then how could he manage such a vast number of beasts, tie them together, put them in their proper places, and set firebrands to them; and all this without being discovered by the owners of the corn, who might have risen in a body with all their neighbours, and prevented his design. Truly I cannot account for it, nor do I think he did any such thing. The Hebrew word *schualim,* which is rendered *foxes,* differs but one very small stroke at the top of one letter, from the Hebrew word *schoalim,* which signifies *sheaves.* This very little mistake might be made in transcribing; and allowing this, all the difficulty vanishes at once. When Samson had determined to destroy their corn, he observed they had made up all their sheaves into three hundred shocks; these three hundred shocks could not be set on fire, one after another, without loss of time, and danger of discovery: on this account he judged it necessary to lay two sheaves of corn at length upon the ground, to make a communication between every two shocks; for this purpose he turned tail to tail, or the bottom of one sheaf to the top of another. Observe, it is not said, he *tied tail to tail,* but *he turned one towards the other,* and then putting some combustible matter between the two sheaves, such as hemp, flax, or the like, which he could easily carry, he set fire to it, which probably aided by a dry season, and the wind, spread directly from sheaf to sheaf, and shock to shock; and running over the neighbouring fields, consumed the standing corn, the vineyards and olives. All this, an ingenious active man, as Samson was, could do in one night, and without discovery.' Let the reader judge, whether this is not the most easy, natural, and plain account of the matter. See Saurin's Dissertations, Vol. IV. Diss. 17.

mitted no offence? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us; *we have no quarrel with you, but with Samson, for the injury he hath done to us.* 11 Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines [are] rulers over us, *and therefore are not to be attacked and offended by us?* what [is] this [that] thou hast done unto us? *thou hast provoked them to come against us, and we shall smart for it.* And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them, *I have only requited the wrong I have received.* 12 And they said unto them, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines*. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves; *instead of upbraiding them with cowardice, he consents on this condition.* 13 And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock; *their tender mercy was cruelty, they would not kill him, but deliver him bound to his enemies, that they might kill him.*

14 [And] when he came up to Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him, *for joy that they had got their enemy into their hands:* and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that [were] upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands, *melted like wax before the fire.* 15 And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith†. 16 And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men‡. 17 And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi, *that is, the lifting up, or, casting away, of the jawbone, to perpetuate his victory and the Philistines' disgrace.*

18 And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said,

* This was strange indeed! they should rather have made him their captain, and gone out against the Philistines, and thrown off the yoke. But they chose rather to secure peace by delivering up their brave countryman, than make an attempt to recover their liberty.

† It would have been wonderful to have slain so many with a sword or spear, but more so with this poor weapon. No doubt when the Philistines saw him break his cords so easily, and fearing the men of Judah would join him, they all fled, and gave him a great advantage against them.

‡ This was his triumphant song. It is beautiful in the original, as the word signifies both an ass and an ape.

Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised*? But God *had compassion upon him, and* clave an hollow place that [was] in the jaw, *not in the jaw itself, but in Lehi, as in the margin, that is, the place where the action was performed,* and there came water thereout: and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, *that is, the well of him that called, or cried,* which [is] in Lehi unto this day, *in the field that is so called, in remembrance of this exploit.* 20 And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years; *Israel submitted to him, the country was quiet, and the Philistines made no inroads upon them.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. From the calamity that befel Samson's wife, we learn, that *the fear of the wicked shall come upon them.* She betrayed and abused her husband, for fear of being burned; and now she is plunged into the flames she would have avoided. It is a common case in the world. When men through unreasonable fears, or from other motives, betray their friends and violate their consciences, what can they expect but suffering? *The God to whom vengeance belongeth* brought this evil upon her; and it often happens that those who deal treacherously, are dealt treacherously with: sooner or later there will be a recompense for both good and evil.

2. In perusing such chapters as this, let us not seek after or be influenced by allegorical interpretations. This is hinted at here, because nothing has done greater dishonour to scripture: men of warm imaginations pretend to find strange mysteries even in a plain narrative, and much more in dark or doubtful passages. Scarce any chapter in the bible has been more tortured than this; especially the story of Samson's foxes. Some have made it a type of Christ's disciples; which, by the way, is no compliment to them. Multitudes have made Samson a type of Christ himself, because he said in figurative language, *he was come to send fire on the earth.* A celebrated commentator among the ejected ministers makes it a type of heretics, by which he meant the Cavaliers and Arminians in the church; and, in order to be even with him, a high

* Josephus says this dreadful thirst was brought upon him as a punishment for not acknowledging the hand of God in this affair. *I have slain a thousand,* but not a word of God's hand or help in it.

church writer published a virulent book against the dissenters, and called it Foxes and Firebrands. And if the commentators of the present day had no more sense, they might make it a type of the Corsairs and Algerines. It is a matter of great importance to guard against being led into false interpretations of the scriptures, by those commentators who deal much in types and allegories, and make plain history say, or at least signify, any thing and every thing. It is this which has made the word of God so little understood, and opened the mouths of the enemies of revelation to banter and blaspheme.

3. This chapter furnishes us with repeated instances of the power of God; and shows us, that he can never be at a loss to strengthen and relieve his servants. These stories are not incredible, because they are not impossible. The hand of the LORD is in them. Under the influence of that spirit of strength and courage which he can impart, *one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight*, and that even by a jawbone; and rather than one who is fighting his battles shall perish for thirst, he may *turn a rock into a fountain of water*. In him let us trust for the strength we want against our spiritual enemies; for through him we may hope to do valiantly; and let us take encouragement to trust in him from these ancient records of his power and goodness, and argue, as Samson does in *v.* 18, from past experience of his care. Let us hope and believe that if we are faithful to him, *he who hath delivered and who doth deliver, will still deliver;* and that he, with whom nothing is impossible, *will make us more than conquerors.*

CHAPTER XVI.

Samson carries away the gates of Gaza; Delilah, corrupted by the Philistines, enticeth and overcometh him; the Philistines put out his eyes; the manner of his death, and of thousands of the Philistines who were slain with him.

1 THEN went Samson to Gaza, *which lay in the southern part of the country, to see what posture things were in,* and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her, *fell in company with a bad woman, and was nearly ruined by her.* 2 [And it was told] the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither, *perhaps he was discovered by the woman herself.* And they compassed [him] in,

and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, *lest he should be alarmed, and break through their guard,* saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. 3 And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city; and the two posts, and went away with them bar and all, and put [them] upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that [is] before Hebron, *between Gaza and Hebron; probably he slew some of the guard, and the rest being terrified, ran away.*

4 And it came to pass afterwards, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, *a place in the tribe of Judah, but now in the possession of the Philistines, where he was again entangled by a woman,* whose name [was] Delilah, *which signifies a consumer or destroyer; a proper name for such an infamous creature.* 5 And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength [lieth,] and by what [means] we may prevail against him, that we may bind him, to afflict him; *probably he had boasted, that the secret where his great strength lay was only known to himself; they imagined it was some spell or charm; they say nothing about killing him, lest she should startle at the proposal:* and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred [pieces] of silver, *more than seven hundred pounds; willing to be at any expense to get rid of such a powerful enemy.* 6 And Delilah said to Samson, *in the midst of her caresses, and as if greatly concerned about every circumstance that related to a person whom she so much loved,* Tell me I pray thee, wherein thy great strength [lieth,] and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee. 7 And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man; *a notorious lie; but he hoped thus to put her off and satisfy her.* 8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she *prevailed with him to let her try the experiment, and* bound him with them. 9 Now [there were] men lying in wait abiding with her in the chamber, *whom she intended to call in if he had not broken them, otherwise she was to turn it off in jest.* And she said unto him, The Philistines [be] upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known. 10 And Delilah said unto Samson, *at some convenient distance of time afterwards,* Behold, thou hast mocked me and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest

be bound. 11 And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, *in the Hebrew, wherewith work hath not been done,* then shall I be weak, and be as another man. 12 Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And [there were] liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he break them from off his arms like a thread. 13 And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web*. And she fastened [it] with the pin, *to make it secure,* and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web, *easily carrying all away by the strength of his hair.*

15 And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart [is] not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength [lieth.] *She perhaps threatened to cast him off, because he only pretended to love her, or else he would not have refused telling her such a secret. This was an argument which his foolish fondness could not resist; he was vexed to have his affection called in question.* 16 And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, [so] that his soul was vexed unto death; 17 That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I [have been] a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any [other] man. *He knew that the preservation of his hair was the condition on which his strength was continued to him.* 18 And when Delilah saw *by the peculiar seriousness and affection with which he spoke to her,* that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath showed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand, *according to their promise in* ver. 5. 19 And she made him sleep upon her knees, *gave him some strong sleeping potion, or made him drink wine, which, as he had never tasted it before, would soon intoxicate him; and at the same time break his vow of Nazariteship:* and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave

* The Nazarites never cut their hair, but plaited it up in seven locks. These she was to weave together, and fasten them about a weaver's beam, and at a convenient time when he was asleep, she did so.

off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, *by binding, thrusting, or some such like means, to try his strength*, and his strength went from him. 20 And she said, The Philistines [be] upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself; *being newly awoke, he did not miss his hair; and made no doubt but he could put forth his strength and destroy them at once.* And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

21 But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house. *They had so much conscience as to keep their promise with Delilah not to kill him, but only to afflict him; they thought thus to gratify their revenge, and get a great deal of work out of him.* 22 Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven *as it did before; and it seems probable that he spent this time in repentance and prayer, and renewing his vow, and that God was entreated to renew his extraordinary strength.*

23 Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god*, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. 24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. *He was exposed to public view, and they sang songs of triumph on the occasion.* 25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport, *that we may laugh at him, buffet him, and give him something to try his strength upon.* And they called for Samson out of the prison-house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars†.

26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. 27 Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines [were] there; and [there were upon the roof about three thousand men and

* Whose image had the upper part like a man, and the lower like a fish. It was their Neptune, or god of the sea-coast, on which they dwelt, and to which they owed their wealth.

† These stood in the middle of the house or temple of Dagon, where they were all assembled; the lords and nobles were below, and a great number of common people on the top. We read of some such large edifices among the ancients, that were only supported by one or two great pillars in the middle, and smaller ones round them.

women, that beheld while Samson made sport. 28 And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O LORD God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes*. 29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. 30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines; *I am willing to die, so I can but thereby contribute any thing to the vindication of God's glory and the deliverance of his people.* And he bowed himself with [all his] might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that [were] therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than [they] which he slew in his life. 31 Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought [him] up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burying place of Manoah his father. *The Philistines were so weakened and dispirited, that they did not care to oppose it, and provoke the Israelites to fall upon them.* And he judged Israel twenty years. *Thus ends the history of this strong man. The apostle celebrates his faith in Heb.* xi. 32., *but some think this is no decisive proof of his real piety, though the apostle might have sufficient evidence that he had repented of his monstrous and aggravated crimes.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE may make one useful reflection from the words of this impure and treacherous woman, *that they only have our love who have our hearts.* Good words and wishes are cheap things, but without the heart, all is flattery and deceit. This is true with regard to our love of God: if any profess love to him, and it is no more than external worship, or bodily exercise, it is all vain and preposterous. Love consists in the sincerity and warmth of our affection; and if we do not love God with our whole heart, how can it be said that we love him at all?

2. There are many from whom God is departed, who yet are ignorant of it; they continue rich, healthy, and merry; but God

* As far as he was influenced by a revengeful spirit, he was undoubtedly wrong. But forgiveness of injuries was not then so well understood as it is now under the gospel. Besides, they had contemned the God of Israel, and so he was avenging his cause against their idol Dagon, in whose temple he was standing; therefore God heard his prayer, and miraculously strengthened him.

is become their enemy, and they know it not, nor consider it; never complain of their loss, but go on as if all was well, and expect *that things will be as at another time.* This is the worst calamity than can come upon us: *Wo unto them,* says God, *when I depart from them:* so it was in Samson's case. Let us be afraid of offending God, for if he depart from us, all good goes, and we are exposed to every kind of evil and misery.

3. Let us learn of these idolatrous Philistines, to ascribe all deliverances and success to God. Though their lords' money and Delilah's treachery brought Samson into their hands, yet they ascribed it to their god. Thus will every man walk in the name of his god; may we walk in the name of, and pay our tribute of praise to, JEHOVAH, the only living and true God, the universal King! Let us especially praise him for national deliverances, and never forget his kind appearances for us.

4. We learn from the whole chapter, that there cannot be a more contemptible or miserable creature, than he who is a slave to lust, and entangled with unlawful love. This story is a comment on that remark of the apostle, *when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and when sin is finished, it bringeth forth death.* What a contemptible character does this strongest of men exhibit, when he, who with so much ease tore the lion, slew thousands of the Philistines, and carried away the gates of Gaza, was entangled with one whorish woman after another! So much easier is it to perform wonders, than to govern our own passions. It is much to be wondered at that a man of common sense should not be aware of what this treacherous woman was designing against him; that he should be such an arrant fool as to tell her his whole heart, when he might easily perceive what she intended. But *whoredom takes away the heart,* blinds the eyes, and makes men fools. Let those *whose eyes behold strange women,* and are led away by fleshly lusts, *hear and fear,* and learn from the catastrophe of this great man, what *a wound and dishonour whoremongers get,* and that *the adulteress hunts for the precious life.* Lo, the eyes which doted on strange women, are put out; he that was a slave to an harlot, is become so to the Philistines. May we all maintain, not only the greatest chastity of behaviour, but the utmost purity of heart. Let those especially who are young, healthy, and gay, be sensible that they are in peculiar danger; and learn from this story not to boast of, or confide in, their strength, or their privileges as christians, or any peculiar relation to God. Let them guard against every thing

that may have a tendency to stir up irregular desires; and especially avoid, as dangerous and pestilential, the company of rakes and debauchees, or bold immodest women. It is probably in allusion to this story, as well as from his own unhappy experience, that Solomon thus cautions, *Prov.* vii. 24—27., *Hearken unto me, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths: for she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.*

CHAPTER XVII.

The history of the acts of the judges and governors of Israel ended with the former chapter; those which follow contain an account of some memorable events which happened in their time, or rather, before it; but were not related in their place, that the writer might not interrupt the history. It is generally thought they happened between the death of the elders and the first judge, near three hundred years before Samson's time. We have in this chapter an account how Micah procured a god and a priest.

1 AND there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name [was] Micah. *Idolatry crept into Israel in the tribe of Ephraim.* 2 And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred [shekels] of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver [is] with me; I took it. *She must have been a rich and notable woman to have hoarded up eleven hundred pieces of silver, worth one hundred and twenty-five pounds of our money. The son found out the hoard and stole it; his mother cursed, that is, imprecated ruin and destruction on the person who had taken it; the son hearing that, was affected, and confessed, for fear the curse should light upon him.* And his mother said, Blessed [be thou] of the LORD, my son; *instead of reproving him for his theft, she prayed that the curse might be turned into a blessing, because he had so freely confessed his fault.* 3 And when he had restored the eleven hundred [shekels] of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand, *to the service of the true God, though in an idolatrous way,* for my son,

to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee, *that thou mayest cause these things to be made, as representations or remembrancers of the true God, and in honour to him, as they thought. Perhaps this woman was one who came out of Egypt, had seen idolatry there, and the golden calf, and retained something of the old superstitions.* 4 Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred [shekels] of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image, and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah; *the rest of the money she gave to her son to make the sacred utensils, and to adorn his chapel.*

5 And the man Micah had a house of gods, and made an ephod, *that is, a garment like the high priest's,* and teraphim, *little images, like the household gods of the heathen, by which they consulted their deity, waiting for an answer by some omen or occurrence that happened afterwards;* and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest, *he filled his hands, that is, put sacrifices and offerings into it. This seems to have been the first instance of revolt to idolatry after the death of Joshua, and therefore is so particularly mentioned.* 6 In those days [there was] no king in Israel, *no supreme magistrate to punish offenders* [but] every man did [that which was] right in his own eyes.

7 And there was a young man out of Beth-lehem-judah of the family of Judah, who [was] a Levite, and he sojourned there. 8 And the man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-judah to sojourn where he could find [a place:] and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. *He seems to have been a rambling fellow, who, forgetting his sacred character and office, strolled about inquiring who had any work for a Levite? ready to hire himself to any one who would have him; he came to Micah's house probably to ask alms.* 9 And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I [am] a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find [a place.] 10 And Micah, *who thought his chapel would be more like the tabernacle if he had but a Levite for his priest, without inquiring into his character,* said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, *a teacher and governor in the family, as well as a priest in the chapel;* and I will give thee ten [shekels] of silver by the year, *about twenty-five shillings a year wages,* and a suit of apparel, *a double suit, one for summer, and one for winter,* and thy victuals. So the Levite went in; *this shabby wretch consented to the proposal; he should have known*

better, and reproved Micah for his idolatry, and taught him the law. 11 And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons, *both of them were highly pleased.* 12 And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. *This was the highest presumption in both; the Levite, not being of Aaron's family, was incapable of being a priest; and Micah had no authority to consecrate him.* 13 Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to [my] priest. *He thought this was a mark of the divine favour, and that his services would be more acceptable to God; such was the darkness and confusion of those times.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WE see in Micah, what evils the love of money produces: it tempted him to rob his mother, and her to fly into such a violent rage as to curse the person that had meddled with her treasure. Her silver was her god before she had made an image of it; or else she would not have been so outrageous when it was stolen. The loss of a little money makes covetous men impatient and fretful; and they are ready to curse the persons by whom they have suffered. But good men are easy and contented; they can smile at such disappointments; and instead of cursing, will pity the thief, and pray for him. Would we govern our passions, let us lessen our value for the things of this world, as well knowing that *the love of money is the root of all evil.*

2. We may learn hence, that parents should be very careful to set their children good examples, for they will easily be seduced by bad ones. We do not find that Micah had any thoughts of idolatry, till his superstitious mother put it into his head. She would have a graven image, and therefore he would have a house of gods, and garments, and sacred utensils. This suggests to us, that when parents do wickedly, their children in all probability will do the same; yea, be worse than they; as streams are wider than their fountains. As parents therefore regard their own comfort, and the happiness of their children, let them never do any thing which may lead them into sin, or give them, in the least degree, an handle to do wickedly.

3. It is common for men to think that God approves and favours them, because they enjoy some external privileges, or reform some irregularities. Perhaps Micah was convinced that

he had done wrong in consecrating his son; but now having, as he thought, done right in one particular, that is, in having a Levite for his priest, he thought that God would do him good. He probably looked upon the rest of the Israelites as carnal and ungodly; and said to them, *Stand by, I am holier than thou*, when really he was turned to a pagan. He was guilty of many aggravated crimes in this transaction, and should rather have argued thus, 'How will God punish me, and blast all my designs, because I have broken his law, affronted his worship, and set up idols in my house.' Thus men are apt to think that God is pleased with them, because they enjoy some advantages, have godly parents, or live in praying families, and the like; or because God favours them in one instance, they think he is not displeased at their evil doings: a very common, but a very dangerous, error this; for one instance of right conduct can never atone for allowed errors and guilt, no privileges will answer for an unholy life. If we desire to be accepted of God, and to receive good at his hand, *we must be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

Contains the history of the spread of idolatry from the family of Micah into a considerable part of the tribe of Dan; there are some hints of this story in Joshua xix. 47., but here it is enlarged upon.

1 IN those days [there was] no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites, *that is, a large family in that tribe,* sought them an inheritance to dwell in, for unto that day [all their] inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel, *they were straitened for room by the old inhabitants, the Amorites,* chap. i. 34. 2 And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts *northwards,* men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there, *near to Micah's house, probably at an inn where the people that attended at Micah's chapel, used to put up.* 3 When they [were] by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who

brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this [place?] and what hast thou here? *how art thou employed, and how maintained?* 4 And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest. 5 And they, *being as ignorant and stupid as himself,* said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. 6 And the priest *gave them such an one as pleased them, and* said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD, *under his eye and protection,* [is] your way wherein ye go.

7 Then the five men departed, and came to Laish *in the north of Canaan, at the foot of mount Lebanon;* and saw the people that [were] therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure: and [there was] no magistrate in the land, that might put [them] to shame in [any] thing; and they [were] far from the Zidonians, *so that they could not come to help them,* and had no business with [any] man, *no trade or commerce, but were an idle, voluptuous people, and therefore secure and confident.* 8 And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What [say] ye? *What news have ye got, what report do ye bring?* 9 And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and behold, it [is] very good: and [are] ye still? *do you question our report?* be not slothful to go, [and] to enter to possess the land, *you have nothing to do but to march and possess it.* 10 When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where [there is] no want of any thing that [is] in the earth: *encouraging them by three arguments: it is a good country; it may be easily obtained; and, from the Levite's answer, they concluded that God had given it them.* 11 And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed, *or girded,* with weapons of war, *and who carried their wives and children and stuff with them.* 12 And they went up, and pitched in Kirjath-jearim, in Judah, *in the camp of Dan, where Samson afterwards lived; see* chap. xiii. 25., wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan, unto this day: behold, [it is] behind Kirjath-jearim. 13 And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah; *this was their second day's journey.*

14 Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven

image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do, *whether it may not be advisable to take them along with us; they will be a good booty, we have had a favourable answer from them already; and they will be very convenient for us, being so far from Shiloh.* 15 And they turned thitherward, and came to the house, *or apartments,* of the young man the Levite, [even] unto the house of Micah, and saluted him. 16 And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which [were] of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate, *and the Levite came out and saluted them, and wished them success.* 17 And, *while the Levite was paying his respects to them,* the five men that went to spy out the land went up *to the chapel,* [and] came in thither, [and] took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men [that were] appointed with weapons of war. 18 And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye? *He expostulated with them for the sacrilege, as it was an injury to himself, spoiled his trade and craft, whereby he got his wealth.* 19 And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: [is it] better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? *Better be chaplain to a regiment than to a private gentleman; better be priest to a city than to a single house: and this ambitious, covetous man was easily influenced.* 20 And the priest's heart was glad *of such encouragement,* and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people, *the better to secure his trinkets, or in an apish imitation of the manner in which the ark was carried.* 21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them, *being exposed to more danger from Micah in the rear, than from the Amorites in the front.*

22 [And] when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that [were] in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan; *finding his chapel robbed, and his chaplain had out-run him, he gathered his neighbours together, and after some time overtook the robbers:* 23 And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? *that thou art gathered together in*

this hostile manner? 24 And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: *fine gods that could be stolen!* and what have I more? and what [is] this [that] ye say unto me, What aileth thee? *Strange that you should ask me what is the matter, when you have taken from me what I valued above all the world.* 25 And the children of Dan *gave him a right soldier's answer,* and said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. 26 And the children of Dan went their way, *turned from him in scorn.* And when Micah saw that they [were] too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house, *he loved his life better than his gods; he knew they could not defend him, whatever noise he made about them.*

27 And they took [the things] which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people [that were] at quiet and secure, *just as the spies had represented:* and they smote them with the edge of the sword, *and took the spoil,* and burnt the city with fire. 28 And [there was] no deliverer, because it [was] far from Zidon, *their patrons and protectors,* and they had no business with [any] man, *they could send no intelligence, nor were any persons concerned for them;* and it was in the valley that [lieth] by Beth-rehob. And they built a *larger and more convenient* city, and dwelt therein. 29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city [was] Laish at the first*.

30 And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan, *to that part of the tribe,* until the day of the captivity of the land, *that is, till the ark and many Israelites were taken captive by the Philistines at Eli's death, as appears by the last verse compared with* Psalm lxxviii. 60, 61. 1 Sam. iv. 10. 31 And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh†.

* This was the northern boundary of Canaan. Hence came the expression, *from Dan even to Beer-sheba.* This place was afterwards called *Cæsarea Philippi:* in this, Moses' prophecy was fulfilled, *Deut.* xxxiii. 22., *Dan is a lion's whelp,* &c.

† Idolatry lurked here all the time of the judges, and was so famous for the resort of worshippers, that Jeroboam set up one of his calves there. This was the first public idolatry in Israel; and thus Jacob's prophecy was fulfilled. *Dan is a serpent by the way, Gen.* xlix. 17., he shall seduce the rest of the people; in allusion to the fall by the old serpent. And this illustrates Jacob's words which follow, *I have waited for thy salvation,* that is, for deliverance by the Messiah, who was to turn men from idols to the living and true God.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We learn from these idolaters, the reasonableness of acknowledging God in all our ways. They were desirous to consult idolatrous images, to know whether it was agreeable to the will of God that they should proceed in their design. How proper is it for us to inquire by prayer, *what God would have us to do*, and to take him with us. If *our way is before the Lord*, we may *go in peace*, and depend on success.

2. We may observe, that idle, luxurious, careless people, are in a fair way to ruin. This was the case of the men of Laish; they dwelt at ease, had no business to mind: thus idleness begets vice. There was no magistrate to punish them, therefore the sinners grew impudent and bold, so that it was no wonder they were ruined. This is too just a description of many towns in this kingdom, where men live in idleness, and magistrates, whose business it is to put sinners to shame, by bringing them to punishment, neglect their duty, and *bear the sword in vain*. How miserable are such places, and how near to ruin! Every one therefore should endeavour to promote trade, and encourage diligence. All persons in private stations should labour to put vice out of countenance, and to keep up the reputation of virtue and religion; they should be more attentive, in proportion to the degree in which magistrates are negligent: and all should pray, that God would stir up those who have authority, to use it for him; and *be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them who do well.*

3. Let us learn from the story of Micah, to judge what has the chief place in our hearts, what is the supreme object of our affection, by observing what we are most unwilling to part with; what it is, the loss of which affects us most. If we lose our money, or health, or friends, or reputation, and act as if we had lost our all, and say, What have we more? it is a sign we make those things idols, and set them up in the place of God. If our happiness be bound up in any creature comfort whatever, it usurps the regard we owe to him, and shows that we are real idolaters. An interest in God is our best treasure; the loss of his favour is our greatest loss, and an irreparable damage; *woe be to us if he depart*, for *what have we more?*

4. See *how great a matter a little fire kindleth;* what great mischief one tolerated sin may produce! Micah set up an idol to please his own vicious fancy, and a whole city, and probably all

about it, were ensnared and corrupted by it, and the corruption continued for many ages. Let us learn to be afraid of the least sin, for *it will continually increase to more ungodliness;* the infection, though small at first, will spread more and more; *the beginning of it is as when one letteth out water.* Let us *therefore leave it off, before it be meddled with.*

CHAPTER XIX.

This and the two following chapters give us an account of the wickedness of the Benjamites, and their punishment for it. The story in all respects is very melancholy.

1 AND it came to pass in those days, when [there was] no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Beth-lehem-judah; *she was a lawful wife, but had no dowry, he had no other.* 2 And his concubine played the whore against him*, and went away from him unto her father's house to Beth-lehem-judah, and was there four whole months. 3 And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, *(in the Hebrew, to her heart,)* [and] to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses; *like an honest, worthy man, he had forgiven her offences, and went to fetch her home; and he was received very gladly by her father:* and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. 4 And his father-in-law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there. 5 And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son-in-law, Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterwards go your way. *He wished to detain him longer, that their mutual affection might be strengthened.* 6 And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night,

* Our translation says, *she played the whore;* the original word properly signifies *she was obstinate and disobedient;* she did not like his company, and went away from him in an ill humour.

and let thine heart be merry. 7 And when the man rose up to depart, his father-in-law urged him: therefore he lodged there again. 8 And he arose early in the morning of the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried until afternoon, *till the day declined*, and they did eat both of them. 9 And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father-in-law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day draweth towards evening, *(in the Hebrew, is weak)*, I pray you, tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to-morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home. 10 But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came overagainst Jebus, which [is] Jerusalem*; and [there were] with him two asses saddled, his concubine also was with him. 11 [And] when they [were] by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. 12 And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that [is] not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to Gibeah. 13 And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah. 14 And they passed on and went their way: and the sun went down upon them [when they were] by Gibeah, which [belongeth] to Benjamin. 15 And they turned aside thither, to go in [and] to lodge in Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city: for [there was] no man that took them into his house to lodging. *Probably there was no public inn, and what was worse, there was no hospitality, no common humanity, except in one poor old Ephraimite.*

16 And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which [was] also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place [were] Benjamites. 17 And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? *the usual question put to travellers.* 18 And he said unto him, We [are] passing from Beth-lehem-judah, towards the side of mount Ephraim; from thence [am] I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I

* The lower part of the city was taken by Judah; but *Zion*, or the *Fort*, was in the hands of the Jebusites till David's time; and they had such a command of the city, that the Israelites were forced to let them dwell with them, *ch.* i. 21. But this event might have happened before Judah had possession of it.

[am now] going to the house of the LORD, *to Shiloh, to give thanks for family mercies, and the return of my wife; and to make atonement for her fault, and then return home;* and there [is] no man that receiveth me to house. 19 Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man [which is] with thy servants: [there is] no want of any thing *but a lodging.* 20 And the old man said, Peace [be] with thee; howsoever [let] all thy wants [lie] upon me; only lodge not in the street, *thou art welcome to my house, and the best entertainment I have.* 21 So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, *as was always customary in those hot countries,* and did eat and drink.

22 [Now] as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, [and] beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. *But he knew their wicked intentions and lewd manner: probably it was a usual thing with them,* 23 And *therefore* the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, [nay,] I pray you, do not [so] wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly; *expostulating with them from the laws of hospitality, and the greatness of the sin; and he adds,* 24 Behold, [here is] my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing. *This was quite an improper and unwarrantable offer; but probably he was in confusion and terror, and knew not, or did not consider, what he said, like Lot in a similar case.* 25 But the men would not hearken to him, *and as we find in the next chapter threatened to kill the Levite if he did not bring out his wife:* so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go. 26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord [was,] till it was light. *Those wretches had treated her so ill that she died.* 27 And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down [at] the door of the house, and her hands [were] upon the threshold. 28 And, *supposing her to be*

in a deep sleep, having come too late to be let in, he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her [up] upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place, *returned home as fast as he could, without going to Shiloh.*

29 And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, [together] with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coast of Israel; *there was no king in Israel to revenge such a crime, but the heads of the tribes met and consulted together on extraordinary occasions. In order to engage their help in this case, he sent a part of the dead body to every tribe, that the mournful story and the horrid spectacle might incense them against the authors of this execrable wickedness.* 30 And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak [your minds.] *It had the desired effect; they were highly incensed, and exhorted one another not to pass over such an horrid crime, but to consider how it ought to be punished.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. It becomes all men, and especially God's ministers, to be frugal of their time. This Levite though well entertained, and upon a joyful occasion, wanted to be at home, and suffered greatly through the foolish importunity of his father-in-law. An honest man's heart is where his calling is; and no one who has business to do, and understands the value of time, will trifle on a journey, and stay to oblige his friends without necessity. The kindness of friends is very often a great injury, by obliging people to travel late, and thereby exposing them to danger, as well as wasting a great deal of time. It is good hearing when Levites are willing to make haste home to their proper business; and their friends do them harm who press them for frequent and long visits.

2. When we are in the most agreeable circumstances of life, we know not what evil may be before us, and therefore should never be secure. This Levite was pleased in having regained the affections of his wife; she was pleased to return to him; the father-in-law was pleased that the breach was made up; and they were cheerful together in an hospitable house, when this calamity

came upon them. If she was guilty of adultery, as our translation intimates, God was righteous in punishing her, though her husband had forgiven her. However, the story teaches us, that we know not what danger may be before us, nor how soon the end of our mirth may be heaviness. When we expect most comfort, *God may be writing bitter things against us.* Our creature-comforts and enjoyments are all uncertain; and therefore *we should be as though we possessed them not,* and prepare for disappointments.

3. What horrible wickedness were these Benjamites guilty of! And it should be a matter of lamentation that such creatures should be found in Israel. They were undoubtedly acquainted with the fate of Sodom; nay, not many miles from them was that lake where the city was buried: and yet so intolerably wicked were they, that the Levite had better have lodged among the Jebusites; they could not have used him worse. The first sign of their wickedness was leaving a stranger, and a Levite, to lodge in the street. If the fear of God had been in any of their houses, his servants had not been excluded. 'But, (as Bishop Hall says,) the worst of pagans were saints to these Israelites. What availed it to have Shiloh in their neighbourhood, and Sodom in their streets? to have God's law in their hands, and upon their fringes, and the devil in their hearts? Nothing but hell can yield a worse creature than a depraved Israelite.' See what wretched creatures God's professing people are, when they are led away by fleshy lusts, and lose their purity and holiness. Let it teach us to stand in the greatest dread of all the lusts of the flesh, which war against the soul. Once more,

4. The exhortation of the Israelites, on their hearing this melancholy story, suggests a good hint to us what to do in all difficult cases. Let us *consider of it,* revolve the matter in our thoughts, view it in every light with calmness, without prejudice and partiality; then, in opposition to rash judgment, *take advice,* canvass it over with others, take their opinion, and attend to the force of their reasoning, in opposition to conceit and positiveness; and then *speak our mind,* be resolute and open, in opposition to cowardice, and act steadily and boldly, according to our deliberate judgment, especially in cases of virtue and righteousness. Thus are we likely to act a wise and worthy part; and *in the multitude of such counsellors there will be safety.*

CHAPTER XX.

The Levite in a general assembly declareth his wrong; their decree; and the destruction of the Benjamites.

1 THEN all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together, as one man, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD in Mizpeh, *the place where the assemblies were held in Joshua's time: it was in the centre of the country near Shiloh, and not far from Gibeah.* 2 And the chief of all the people, [even] of all the tribes of Israel, *the heads of the tribes, (except Benjamin) the captains of thousands, of hundreds, and tens,* presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword. 3 (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh; *they had a legal summons to appear there, but refused.)* Then said the children of Israel, Tell [us,] how was this wickedness? 4 And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into Gibeah that [belongeth to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. 5 And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, [and] thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they forced that she is dead. 6 And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. *No doubt the Levite's story was confirmed by his servant, and the old man who was his host. He adds,* 7 Behold, ye [are] all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel; *ye are a people in covenant with God, and engaged to abhor and punish such enormities*.*

8 And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any [of us] go to his tent, neither will we any [of us] turn into his house. *It is probable, from* chap. xxi. 1—5., *that they not only came to a resolution, but took an oath, that they would not return home till they had seen justice done, and this wickedness punished.* 9 But now this [shall be] the thing which we will do

* He could not address all the people; it is therefore probable that a committee was appointed to examine the evidence, and report to the people what they judged proper to be done.

to Gibeah; [we will go up] by lot against it; 10 And we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel. *Forty thousand were to forage for the rest, to prevent their making excursions, or quitting their arms.* 11 So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man.

12 And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness [is] this that is done among you? *They had heard that the Benjamites were armed, and therefore sent ambassadors to each city, to show the greatness of their crime, and propose terms of peace; and they said,* 13 Now therefore deliver [us] the men, the children of Belial, which [are] in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel, *keep others from such wicked practices, and prevent the judgment of God from falling on them, as it did on Sodom and Gomorrah.* But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel: 14 But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities, unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel. *One would hope there were some good men in their tribe; but they had no influence, and were quite over-ruled by the obstinate and wicked multitude.* 15 And the children of Benjamin were numbered at the time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. 16 Among all this people [there were] seven hundred chosen men left-handed; every one could sling stones at an hair [breadth,] and not miss. *A proverbial expression for great skill; it is a pity that such good marksmen should so miss their aim, as to espouse so bad a cause.* 17 And the men of Israel, besides Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these [were] men of war.

18 And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah [shall go up] first. *They did not inquire whether they should make war at all, and whether they should be successful if they did; they presumed on the justice of their cause, and on their own numbers and strength, and only asked who should be their commander; accordingly Judah is directed to go first and lead*

the van. 19 And the children of Israel rose up in the morning and encamped against Gibeah. 20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah. 21 And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men. *The hand of God was plainly in this, considering their vast superiority. He perhaps directed their arrows and stones against the most guilty Israelites, and hereby prevented the spread of wickedness, and punished them for their self-confidence, idolatry, and other sins.* 22 And the people the men of Israel encouraged themselves *because their cause was good and their numbers great,* and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day. 23 (And the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until even, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.) *They wept not for their sins but their defeat; and neither begged God's assistance nor inquired after success: they thought perhaps they had done wrong in warring against a brother tribe: God gave them permission to go, but did not promise them success.* 24 And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day. 25 And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword. *Thus God cured them of their pride and presumption, in trusting to their numbers without praying for success; and punished them for suffering idolatry among them, as in Dan, when they were ordered to root it out.*

26 Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up and came unto the house of God, and wept, *in a more serious and sincere manner than before,* and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings, *to make atonement for their own sins,* and peace offerings, before the LORD, *to bless God for sparing so many of them, and to implore his assistance for the future.* 27 And the children of Israel inquired of the LORD, *in the tabernacle at Shiloh, near to Gibeah,* (for the ark of the covenant of God [was] there in those days, 28 And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days*), saying, shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of

* This shows that these things happened soon after Joshua's death, near three hundred and fifty years before Samson's time, though the account comes after his

Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? *They now ask a different question, and leave it wholly to God's pleasure; and he gave them an answer of peace, and assured them of success.* And the LORD said, Go up; for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.

29 And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah; *they neglected this before, and smarted for it, now they put ten thousand men in ambush,* ver. 34. 30 And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times. *This was another part of the army that was appointed to assault them, and then presently to retreat.* 31 And the children of Benjamin went out against the people, [and] were drawn away from the city: and they began to smite of the people, [and] kill, as at other times, in the highways, of which one goeth up to the house of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Israel. 32 And the children of Benjamin said, They [are] smitten down before us as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways. 33 And all the men of Israel, *the main body of the army,* rose up out of their place, and put themselves in array at Baal-tamar: and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their places, [even] out of the meadows of Gibeah. 34 And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, *which were liers in wait,* and the battle was sore, *between the main body of the army and the Benjamites that pursued those who fled:* but they knew not that evil [was] near them, *by reason of another party fighting against the city,* ver. 37. 35 And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword. *This is the general sum; the particulars are mentioned,* ver. 44, 45. 36 So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten: for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites, because they trusted unto the liers in wait which they had set beside Gibeah. 37 And the liers in wait hasted, and rushed upon Gibeah; and the liers in wait drew [themselves] along, *or, made a long sound with their trumpets,* and smote all the city with the edge of the sword. 38 Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait, that they should make a great flame with smoke to rise up out of the city. 39 And when the men of Israel retired in the battle, Benjamin began to smite [and] kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons: for they said, Surely they are smitten down before us, [as] in the first battle. But when the

flame began to rise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven. 41 And when the men of Israel turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for they saw that evil was come upon them. *Seeing Gibeah on fire and themselves hemmed in on every side, they were quite confounded and easily destroyed.* 42 Therefore they turned [their backs] before the men of Israel unto the way of the wilderness, but the battle overtook them, and them which [came] out of the cities, *that is, the Benjamites which were left in the city, and fled to avoid the flames and the sword,* they destroyed in the midst of them, *these also the Israelites cut off.* 43 [Thus] they enclosed the Benjamites round about, [and] chased them, [and] trod them down with ease over against Gibeah towards the sun rising. 44 And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men; all these [were] men of valour. 45 And they turned and fled towards the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon, *a strong, inaccessible city, on the edge of the wilderness;* and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men, *a metaphor taken from those who glean grapes or corn, and leave none behind them;* and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them. 46 So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew the sword; all these [were] men of valour. 47 But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months. *These going a nearer way, or being more swift of foot, arrived safe, and continued there four months, till the rage of the Israelites was abated.* 48 And the men of Israel turned again *from the pursuit, and fell* upon the children of Benjamin, *who were in the country round about,* and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of [every] city, as the beast, and all that came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that they came to. *This was cruel and unjustifiable conduct; but being exasperated by their own loss, they were led on to this terrible execution.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. When a good work is to be done for the cause of God and righteousness, it should be done immediately, ver. 8. Zeal, well grounded and properly regulated, is apt to cool. Delays are dangerous, especially where a multitude is concerned, who are

fickle and easily turned, and therefore it is prudent to make a vigorous despatch.

2. We have here a remarkable illustration of that truth, *the battle is not always to the strong*. The Israelites were so much under an equal providence, that had it not been for their iniquities they would not have been disappointed; but they were vainly confident in their numbers and strength, and the goodness of their cause. They forgot to inquire so seriously and solemnly as they should have done, whether God would go with them? There were with them heinous sins against the Lord, that should have been put away. In affairs of less moment, let us guard against confidence and conceit; and put away our iniquity, if we expect the blessing of heaven.

3. We may learn that *the triumphing of the wicked is short*. God suffers them sometimes to be elated with success, that their ruin may be the more remarkable. The Benjamites thought that the Israelites should fall as before; that the day was their own; but they were greatly disappointed. Though the wicked may lift up themselves on high, and imagine all is well, and fear no evil, their day shall come to fall; and it will be more dreadful, in proportion to the degree in which they thought themselves out of danger, and promised themselves safety.

4. We may observe from the whole story, what great mischief one act of wickedness may produce. What a dreadful destruction is here made among the tribes of Israel, by the wickedness of the men of Gibeah! When wickedness is acted, and danger not feared, little do men know what will be in the end thereof; what destruction they may bring on themselves and the community to which they belong. *Know then, and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing to forsake God* and commit iniquity; and that as *righteousness exalteth a nation*; so *sin is a reproach to any people*, and will be the ruin of it.

CHAPTER XXI.

We have seen the destruction of almost the whole tribe of Benjamin; here we read of a strange method taken to repair the desolation.

1 NOW the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife; *though there should many of them escape, yet we will have no dealings nor society with them, but look upon them as heathens.* 2 And the people came to the house of God *at Shiloh*, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept sore. *They mourned over the defeat of their brethren, and celebrated the victory with lamentation instead of joy*;* 3 And said, O LORD God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel? *They expressed great sorrow, and lamented their excessive wrath in killing the women and children.* 4 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings, and peace offerings, *to atone for their rashness, and beg direction from God in this important affair.* 5 And the children of Israel said, Who [is there] among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the LORD to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death; *they had taken an oath to destroy those cities who would not join the expedition, or send some person to the assembly at Mizpeh; because refusing to do it was openly countenancing this great wickedness of the Benjamites.* 6 And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day. 7 How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them of our daughters to wives? *They continue lamenting the case of their brethren, and it was debated in council how they might keep their oath and yet furnish the Benjamites with wives: and one of the council proposed examining the muster-roll.*

8 And they said, What one [is there] of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD, and, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly, *a city on the other side Jordan in the tribe of Manasseh; it was an*

* The Romans allowed no triumph in civil wars.

uncommon instance of zeal that all the people should stay together till this affair was settled. 9 For the people were numbered, and, behold [there were] none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there. 10 And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. *They ordered them to be slain as enemies to the public. This command was too rash; the women and children had not offended; it would have been sufficient to have obliged them to furnish the remainder of the Benjamites with wives.* 11 And this [is] the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man. 12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which [is] in the land of Canaan. 13 And the whole congregation sent [some] to speak to the children of Benjamin that [were] in the rock Rimmon, and to call peaceably unto them, *and give the public faith that they should be secured and return in peace.* 14 And Benjamin came again at that time; and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead; *this they thought might do, as the oath obliged only those who were at the assembly:* and yet so they sufficed them not. 15 And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel; *they lamented that there was not a sufficient number, and held another consultation what was to be done.*

16 Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? 17 And they said, [There must be] an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel; *they that are escaped must have the whole inheritance which belongs to that tribe; and therefore all of them had need to have wives. This showed a generous spirit amidst all their wrath; they would not share the land among themselves, but restored it to those to whom it fell by lot.* 18 Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed [be] he that giveth a wife to Benjamin. 19 Then *some of the council proposed another scheme, which the rest fell in with, and* they said, Behold, [there is] a feast of the LORD in Shiloh yearly* [in a place] which [is] on

* This was the feast of tabernacles, which was celebrated with rejoicing; and at this place the young women who dwelt in Shiloh, and the cities about, used to assemble to dance when the weather permitted them.

the north side of Beth-el, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah. 20 Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards, *which surround the place where they dance:* 21 And see, and behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin *. 22 And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes: because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war, *give those unhappy persons no disturbance, for the Israelites have been to blame in taking such a severe revenge;* for ye did not give unto them at this time, [that] ye should be guilty; *ye have not broken your oath; they took your daughters, and you did not give them away. But after all, this was a poor evasion.* 23 And the children of Benjamin did so, and took [them] wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught †: and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them. 24 And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance. 25 In those days [there was no king in Israel: every man did [that which was] right in his own eyes; *they had an high priest and elders, but they had not such authority as Moses and Joshua, and we see the sad consequences both in this and the foregoing chapters.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. We see that zeal in a good work may be excessive, and degenerate into rashness and revenge. The disposition the Israelites discovered to punish vice was commendable, but carried too far, and showed too much of a cruel spirit. Let us guard our zeal even in a good cause; that is not good divinity

* This might be easily done, as there were only the young women together, *the daughters of Shiloh.* No men, as is the custom of the present day; nor did the married women so far forget their gravity, and regard to their families, as to go with them.

† These were not likely to be happy matches; but they had this one advantage, that they were all matched to the most wealthy men in the country, for the whole land of the tribe of Benjamin was divided among these six hundred men; and if the parents and daughters were like many mothers in the present day, they would think themselves well off that they were allied to men of such large estates. No doubt the step was wrong; they should have acknowledged their sin, repented of their oath, and begged direction from God what to do. But men are more ready to stop the voice of conscience with some device of their own, than to acknowledge that they have done wrong.

which swallows up humanity. How much better had those Israelites acted, if they had shown some tenderness and compassion! they would not then have had ground for lamentation and remorse; but rash vows and actions are generally accompanied with sorrow and distress. Strong passions make work for repentance. Let us, therefore, be careful to rule our own spirits; look well to the end and consequence of an action before we begin it, lest we wish it undone, when it is too late to remedy the evil consequences.

2. The several stories related in this last chapter, should make us thankful for a good government. Blessed be God, that we have a king in our Israel: that men are not suffered *to do that which is right in their own eyes.* Civil government is from God; and to live under one where our lives and liberties, our children and possessions, are secure from violence, is a great blessing, and deserves thankfully to be acknowledged. We in this nation are remarkably distinguished in this respect, and it becomes us to be thankful to God, who *hath fixed the bounds of our habitation:* and while we enjoy the blessings of a good administration, let us adore the Providence which has protected and supported it. While we are careful to *render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,* let us *render unto God the things that are God's. Amen.*

THE BOOK OF

R U T H.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS is an Appendix to the Book of Judges; and takes its title from the person whose story is principally related in it, namely, RUTH, who left her country and relations out of regard to the God of Israel. It was probably written by Samuel, as it brings the history of Israel down to his time. It contains the genealogy of David from Judah, and is in part designed to prove that Christ came out of that tribe, according to Jacob's prophecy.

CHAPTER I.

In which is an account of Ruth being brought into the land of Canaan.

1 NOW it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, *about the time of Gideon*, (Judges vi. 3.), that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. 2 And the name of the man [was] Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah*. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. 3 And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab, *which it was not lawful for them to do, unless they were proselytes to the Jewish religion:* the name of the one [was] Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. 5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband, *in a melancholy condition, in a country of strangers; she had lost her husband, her*

* Bethlehem is called *Ephratha*, on account of its extraordinary fruitfulness; it signifies *the house of bread*, but now famine was there.

sons, and her estate, and was left to the wide world. 6 Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread. *This shows Naomi's affection for the land of Israel, that she returned when the famine was over.* 7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. 8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, *when they had gone part of the way with her,* Go, return each to her mother's house; *and she gave them her blessing, saying,* The LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me, *the Lord be good to you as you have been good wives to my sons, and good daughters to me.* 9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each [of you] in the house of her husband; *she wishes them happily settled again, and free from those incumbrances and troubles to which widows are exposed.* Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice and wept. 10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. *They were grieved to part with her, and resolved to accompany her to Bethlehem.* 11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: Why will ye go with me? [are] there yet [any more] sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12 Turn again, my daughters, go [your way;] for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, [if] I should have an husband also to-night, and should also bear sons; 13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me. *Thus she endeavours to persuade them to return; she was never likely to marry and have more sons, who might, according to the law, marry their brothers' wives: and she was grieved that she was reduced to so low a condition that she was not able to do any thing for them, if they were to go with her.* 14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again; *they were in great trouble, doubting whether they should go with her, or part from her;* and Orpah kissed her mother in law, *took her leave, and returned;* but Ruth clave unto her. 15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. *Naomi would have her think of and deliberate on the consequences, and not go merely out of regard to her, who, being poor, could not help her, and might soon die and*

leave her. 16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, [or] to return from following after thee, *as I am fully determined to do it;* for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; *I will risk my fortune, and be content in any condition with thee:* thy people [shall be] my people, and thy God my God: *a noble and elegant address; which shows that she acted on the best principles, resolving to embrace the Jewish religion, and take Jehovah for her God.* 17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, [if aught] but death part thee and me. *She not only resolved that nothing but death should part them, and that she would lie in the same grave, but this she confirmed by a solemn asseveration, Think of what imprecation you please, and the Lord do it to me, and more, if I am not sincere and resolute.* 18 When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. *She was satisfied, and undoubtedly was glad of her company and converse.* 19 So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved*about them, and they said, [Is] this Naomi? 20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, *that is, pleasant, but* call me Mara, *bitter or sorrowful:* for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, *had money, a husband and sons,* and the LORD hath brought me home again empty, *deprived of all;* why [then] call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? *owning the hand and justice of God in her afflictions.* 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest, *about the time of the passover; this is mentioned as an introduction to the following story.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. WHEN people forsake the post of duty, it is no wonder that they meet with afflictions. Elimelech's removal to Moab was a very wrong step. Had he been in distress, he might have mortgaged his lands, and his brethren by the law of God were obliged

* An ancient version renders it, *the whole city rejoiced.* She was a pious woman, well-beloved, and formerly of great reputation among them; they were glad to see her again, but appearing in a mean habit, and her countenance being greatly altered by years and trouble, they could scarce believe her to be the same person, and cried out, *Is this Naomi?*

to relieve him. But by the expression in *v.* 21., *going out full*, it seems to be intimated, that he was not in distress. If he had been so, he might have endured it as well as his brethren; if not, he might have gone to some other tribe, and not to Moab. To distrust God, and go over to idolaters, was very wrong, and God remarkably punished the family: he and his sons died, and died childless too. It is a dangerous thing, because it is displeasing to God, to forsake the station in which Providence hath placed us, because there are some inconveniences in it; it shows an unstable mind, and a distrust of Providence. They who go out of the way to avoid a cross, will very probably meet with one much more heavy and grievous, and perhaps with death; and there is no outrunning that.

2. Here is an amiable example for mothers and daughters in law, how to behave one to another. These are relations in which there are differences and contentions, more perhaps than in any other; and therefore caution is very proper. Naomi had been a kind, friendly mother to her daughters in law, and tender of their comfort and interest; and they showed great respect to her. Let those whom Providence has brought into this relation, guard against jealousy and suspicion, and any unbecoming carriage. Kindness is a winning quality; and if persons are not beloved, it is generally, if not always, their own fault.

3. Ruth is a good pattern to all, and especially to young people, to be firm and resolute in their adherence to God and religion. Be willing to take the Lord for your God, your father, and ruler; and his people for your people. Let them be your friends and companions; associate with them, and continue among them; and bind yourselves to this in the strongest manner. If sinners would persuade you against this, reject their solicitations with abhorrence. If others return to their sinful companions, be not you led away by them. Nay, if good men should lay any stumbling-block in your way, and seem to discourage you, resolve, in divine strength, to break through all difficulties, and continue faithful to God, and in fellowship with his people, even unto death. You cannot be too resolute and steadfast in what is so good. Be willing, like this pious young woman, to run any risk, or go through any hardship in this world, to save your immortal souls.

4. What a melancholy change may be quickly made in the circumstances of those who are most prosperous and happy! What sorrow had this pious matron endured! The loss of her

children, widowhood, poverty, and distress, in a strange country. She little expected this when she left the land of Canaan. Who can tell what circumstances a man shall be in ten years hence, yea in ten days? May we learn not to expect too much from this world; and look for changes in life. Death will part us and our dearest friends. Let us then expect the parting moment, and beg of God to fit us for every change, especially our great change. And in order to this, let us observe,

5. That it becomes us to acknowledge the hand and justice of God in all the calamities of life. Naomi does this with a great deal of devotion; *the Lord hath brought me home—the Lord hath testified against me—the Almighty hath afflicted me.* Such a sense of the hand of God in every thing that befalls us, will tend to humble us, to prevent our murmuring and complaining against him, and being fretful and peevish with those about us, and also to compose and satisfy our minds under the greatest evils. Let us endeavour, with this good woman, to be humble and patient; to bring our minds to our conditions, and then *it will be good for us to have been afflicted.*

CHAPTER II.

Here we have an account of Ruth's humility and industry; the piety and generosity of Boaz; and Naomi's gratitude, and further advice to her daughter.

1 AND Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name [was] Boaz; *he was the grandson of Nahshon, prince of the tribe of Judah.* 2 And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after [him,] *that is, after any person,* in whose sight I shall find grace, *or favour.* And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. 3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap *or fortune* was to light on a part of the field [belonging] unto Boaz, who [was] of the kindred of Elimelech. *This seemed a casual thing, as she knew not whose field it was; but Providence directed her thither, as will appear in the sequel.* 4 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD [be] with you.

And they answered him, The LORD bless thee. *According to the piety and simplicity of those times, he addressed them with this courteous and serious salutation, which they devoutly returned.* 5 Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel [is] this? *Seeing a stranger, he inquired who she was of his steward who was set over the labourers to see that they did their work, to provide for them, and pay them their wages.* 6 And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It [is] the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: 7 And she said, I pray you, let me glean, and gather after the reapers among the sheaves; *he not only informed him who she was, but how diligent she had been; and that she asked it as a favour to glean, though she might have demanded it as a right according to the law,* Lev. xix. 9, 10.; so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house, *in the hovel or tent, to which they retired in the heat of the day.* 8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens; *treating her with great civility, and desiring her to keep close to the maidens who gathered up corn after his reapers; and assuring her that his young men should not molest her.* 9 [Let] thine eyes [be] on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of [that] which the young men have drawn. 10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, *and made a very decent and grateful reply,* and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I [am] a stranger *whom thou hast never seen before?* 11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, *I have heard of thy filial affection, and* it hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and [how] thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity; and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. *He then blessed her with much seriousness, and said,* 12 The LORD recompense thy work, *this high act of faith and virtue,* and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust*; *may God reward thee like himself, to whose good providence thou hast committed thyself, whose favour*

* An allusion, some say, to the cherubim spreading their wings over the holy place, where the ark was; or rather to an hen cherishing and protecting her brood under her wings.

and protection thou hast sought. 13 Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens; *begging the continuance of his favour, as her greatest comfort under her present affliction, as a stranger and coming from a country of ill character; and therefore not equal to the meanest of his servants. This handsome reply increased the civility* 14 And *respect of* Boaz, *and he* said unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar*. And she sat beside the reapers, *not among them, but near them:* and he, *seeing her modest and unwilling to help herself,* reached her parched [corn,] *corn dried on the fire, which was a common provision among them,* and she did eat, and was sufficed and left. 15 And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not, *as if too bold and assuming.* 16 And, *as an encouragement to her industry,* let fall also [some] of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave [them,] that she may glean [them,] and rebuke her not. 17 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley, *near a bushel.* 18 And she took [it] up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed; *the remainder of the provisions which Boaz gave her when she sat by the reapers.* 19 And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee: *she thought Ruth could not have got so much without the special favour of some generous person. Ruth then told her who he was, but did not know that he was her relation;* And she showed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day [is] Boaz. 20 And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed [be] he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead, *who had shown kindness to her husband and sons, and now to her.* And Naomi said unto her, The man [is] near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen, *or one that hath right to redeem, (see* Lev. xxv. 25.*), that is, to redeem the mortgaged land, and raise up the name of the dead by marrying the widow,* Deut. xxv. 5. 21 And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou

* Bread is put for provisions in general; vinegar was used in those hot countries for sauce, as it was cooling and strengthening.

shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest, *that is, till the end of wheat harvest, which followed the other.* 22 And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, [It is] good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field, *where you will perhaps not be so welcome, and may meet with some ill usage.* 23 So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law, *returning home every evening.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. Here is a good example for those who are in the lowest stations and meanest circumstances of life. In this young woman, the poor have an example of industry, humility, and gratitude; she brought her mind to her condition; was content to glean for her support. She was not ashamed to confess her poverty, nor willing to eat the bread of idleness. Let the poor learn hence to be diligent, to work for their living, and not be burdensome to others, or to beg what they might earn by their labour. Poverty and sloth are very ill matched; and yet how often do we see them meet! Many had rather beg, and stoop to the greatest meanness, or the worst villany, than labour with their hands. Ruth is also a good example of gratitude and respect; she was very thankful for the kindness shown her, and desirous also to secure the interest and favour of her benefactor. We see no arrogant airs, no abuse of his kindness: but the greatest modesty and thankfulness. She finishes her day's work, and instead of gadding about, or trifling with the servants of Boaz, she goes straight home, and minds her own proper business. In this respect servants and poor people ought to imitate her example, as they desire the esteem and kindness of others, and would contract good habits for this world and the next.

2. Here is a good example to masters of families, and those in prosperous circumstances of life. The rich and the wealthy may see how they ought to behave, namely, to look well to their affairs, to be obliging to their servants, and kind to strangers, especially to the pious poor. Boaz, though he had a steward or overseer, came himself, *and looked well to the ways of his household,* had his eye upon every thing. If masters would have their work go on well, they must follow it themselves, and not trust it wholly to

servants. Religion, as well as self-interest, should make men careful and frugal, and cultivate good economy. Let masters learn from this example to treat their servants in a friendly, obliging manner. Boaz comes into the field, and does not begin chiding and scolding them, much less cursing and swearing at them, (as many do without occasion, or with a very small one, to show their authority and indulge their spleen) but, with the greatest respect and piety, prays for them; and they return the civility in the same pious language. Let masters and mistresses be careful that they do not teach their servants an evil lesson against themselves; and by treating them with harshness and roughness, inflame their spirits, and make them worse. A friendly word, and a kind look, will generally do a great deal more than ever so much chiding. And let both masters and servants learn, that piety is an ornament to discourse; and that mutual good wishes for each other are very becoming, provided they are not made things of form. Boaz's charity and civility to a stranger, especially to one that gave such substantial proofs of her piety, is worthy of imitation. *On our tongue let there be the law of kindness.* Let the rich *be ready to distribute and willing to communicate*, especially to God's poor. *Let us have compassion one to another*, and love as brethren; *be pitiful, be courteous.*

3. Let all learn, that those who persist in the discharge of their duty, and put themselves under the protection of heaven, shall not miss their reward. Ruth's humility and industry are here rewarded; and more so, as we shall find hereafter. All of us, whatever our circumstances are, need the favour and protection of God. Let us therefore *come and trust under the shadow of his wings.* Let us fly to him, and rely upon him. So shall a full recompense of reward be given to us, for this is a great and glorious work, and a great and gracious promise is annexed to it, namely, that *God is not unrighteous, to forget our work of faith and our labour of love;* but that *in keeping his commandments there is a great reward.*

CHAPTER III.

We have here the method taken by Ruth to claim Boaz for her husband. The intention in itself was good; it was only to make that claim which the law of God allowed; but the method looked suspicious, and plainly showed too great a distrust of Providence.

THEN Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? *Naomi was desirous of seeking a settlement for her daughter, where she might live more comfortably than she could do with her; she therefore said,* 2 And now [is] not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor. 3 Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: [but] make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. 4 And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down *at his feet;* and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. 5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do. 6 And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her. 7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down *at his feet.* 8 And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. 9 And he said, Who [art] thou? And she answered, I [am] Ruth thine handmaid, spread, therefore, thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou [art] a near kinsman; *take me under thy protection, for thou hast a right to redeem our lands, and claim me as thy wife: and Boaz, instead of reproaching her as an immodest woman, commended her highly.* 10 And he said, Blessed [be] thou of the LORD, my daughter: [for] thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end that at the beginning, *more kindness to thy husband and mother in law, in desiring to preserve the name of the family, than in all the former instances*

of thy affection to them; inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich, *preferring one so much advanced in years, because he is a relation to thy family, rather than a younger person.* 11 And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou [art] a virtuous woman. *He would not have her imagine he thought ill of her because she took this course, or would despise her because she was poor and mean; but would see that she had justice done to her in the morning.* 12 And now it is true that I [am thy] near kinsman; howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. 13 Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, [that] if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, [as] the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning. 14 And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, let it not be known that a woman came into the floor. 15 Also he said, Bring the vail, *or sheet, or apron,* that [thou hast] upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six [measures] of barley, and laid [it] on her, *making her a present of as much corn as she could carry, according to the honest, plain bounty of those ancient times:* and she went into the city. 16 And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who [art] thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. 17 And she said, These six [measures] of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law. 18 Then, said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day: *you may depend upon it, Boaz will keep his word.*

REFLECTIONS.

1. FROM Naomi's concern for her daughter in law, we may observe, that which should be desired in the marriage state is *rest,* and *that it may be well with us;* that the affections may be fixed, and ease and happiness be found. It is the wisdom and duty of parents to seek this rest for their children; by assisting them in the choice of proper help-mates: and to remember, that this rest is not to be expected, where there is not an hearty union

of tempers and affections. And may we all remember, that it is never well with any persons, truly well, till it is well with their souls; they will never have rest till then: this is, therefore, the main thing to be regarded in every choice.

2. Virtue in any station should have its due praise, and be held in high esteem. Boaz commends Ruth for her honest industry and filial affection; yea, the whole city could not but own that *she was a virtuous woman;* her poverty did not hide her virtue; but made it more eminent and remarkable. We ought to commend what is good in the poorest and meanest; steady virtue will approve itself to mankind; and those who behave consistently with their rank and condition, will *find favour both with God and man.*

3. We may observe, that great care ought to be taken to keep up a good name. The conduct of Boaz plainly suggests this remark. He knew the purity of Ruth's intention, and was conscious of his own virtue; yet he was desirous to conceal what might raise suspicion: that he might not trouble those who were good, nor give a handle to those who were bad, to reproach and censure. We ought to be afraid of scandal as well as sin; and not do that which will lay us open to blame, nor let that be known which may be misinterpreted. We should *think on those things that are lovely and of good report;* and *herein exercise ourselves daily, to keep consciences void of offence towards God and man.*

CHAPTER IV.

In this chapter Boaz calls upon the next relation to redeem the estate and marry the widow; which he refusing to do, Boaz is married to Ruth.

1 THEN went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there, *where the elders and magistrates used to meet, and their court was kept; it is probable he was one of them:* and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. 2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. *He*

called these ten elders to be witnesses to the proposal and bargain, according to the good custom of those days. 3 And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land which was our brother Elimelech's: 4 And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy [it] before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem [it,] redeem [it:] but if thou wilt not redeem [it, then] tell me, that I may know: for [there is] none to redeem [it] besides thee; and I [am] after thee. And he said, I will redeem [it.] 5 Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy [it] also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, *and therefore must also marry her* (*Gen.* xxxviii. 8.), to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. 6 And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem [it] for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance; *he probably had a wife and children already; his inheritance might be small; he might fear contentions would arise in his family; and that he could not provide for his former children and those he might have by a young widow; he therefore declined it, and said,* Redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem [it.] 7 Now this [was the manner] in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave [it] to his neighbour: and this [was] a testimony in Israel. *There was no divine law for this, but it was the custom of the country for the seller to take off his shoe in which he used to walk on the ground, and give it to the buyer, who in that shoe was to enter upon it, and take possession, like giving up the key of a house, or a turf of land.* 8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy [it] for thee. So he drew off his shoe, *and thus resigned his claim.* 9 And Boaz said unto the elders, and [unto] all the people, Ye [are] witnesses this day that I have bought all that [was] Elimelech's, and all that [was] Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. 10 Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye [are] witnesses this day. *He calls upon the elders to witness that he had bought the land of Naomi, who had the first claim to it, and then of Ruth as her son's widow.* 11 And all the people that [were] in the gate, and the elders, said, [We are] witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house, like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house

of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Beth-lehem. 12 And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman. *Thus the elders not only declared that they were witnesses, but added their solemn benediction, viz., that he might have a numerous, hopeful issue, like Jacob's wives, and that he and his intended spouse might be examples of virtue and goodness to the whole city.* 13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son. 14 And the women *of the city, who came to congratulate her mother in law on this happy event,* said unto Naomi, Blessed [be] the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. 15 And he shall be unto thee a restorer of [thy] life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him. *They hoped this grandson would live to be a comfort to her, to inherit his mother's virtues, especially her affection for Naomi, who was better to her than seven sons, as she was now possessed of such a plentiful estate.* 16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. 17 And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed, *that is, servant, from the hope that he would be greatly serviceable to her, the comfort and support of her old age, and of the rest of the family:* he [is] the father of Jesse, the father of David, *for whose sake this whole book seems to have been written, that it might be certainly known from whom he descended, as he was one of the ancestors of the Messiah; therefore the genealogy is annexed from Pharez son of Judah to David.*

18 Now these [are] the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, 19 And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, 20 And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, 21 And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, 22 And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

REFLECTIONS.

1. FAIR and open dealings in matters of commerce and contracts, especially in marriage contracts, is extremely desirable and necessary. These several forms, to ascertain the sale of

lands and a contract of marriage, were very proper, and showed that the Israelites in general *studied the things that made for peace*, and that Boaz was a man of eminent wisdom and prudence. Public and open bargains are most likely to be firm and satisfactory; and honest minds never startle at open dealings. Clandestine marriages are very bad things. The reasons why they are concealed, are generally reasons why they should be known and prevented. Our laws forbid them, but artful men, in order to get money, have found out a way to evade the law; and, by the neglect of making marriages more public, innumerable evils have arisen in the world, and vast and irreparable mischiefs have attended many families. What our Lord says in a particular case, may be applied generally, and especially to marriage contracts, *he that doeth evil hateth the light.*

2. The devotion and piety of these early ages are worthy of our imitation. We see that, in the most common occurrences of life, they express a deep sense of God, and much of the spirit of prayer. The manner in which Boaz's neighbours congratulated him upon his marriage, and the birth of his son, teaches us to mingle devotion with civility, and to acknowledge the hand of God in every favourable event. It is a pity this pious language should be lost among us, or grow into mere custom, and words without meaning.

3. It is a great satisfaction to those who are advanced in years, to see their children doing well for this world, more especially for another. This was Naomi's comfort, that her daughter was well married to a man of wealth, and (which she greatly preferred) to a man of integrity, generosity, and piety. She was blessed with a grandson, and saw a new generation rising up to serve God. Let Christian parents endeavour to *bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, that they may have comfort in them when old and dying, and leave them behind with a good hope that they will be the ornaments and supports of religion. *Blessed is he that feareth the Lord, for he shall see his children's children* comfortable and happy, and *peace upon Israel.*

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